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Masters
of
English Literature

By
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PREFACE

THIS book has been written with the conviction that it is better to dwell upon the few great names than to hasten over the many. To study many writers may be one way of covering the field with conscientiousness, but it is also an infallible method of covering the reader with confusion when he tries to recall the details concerning the many obscure writers who long ago trod the path of dusty death. Will not less confusion arise, will not both pleasure and profit be greater, if the emphasis be placed upon the few? To be ignorant of Crabbe, Crashaw, Suckling, and Blake, may be of discredit to the specialist in literature, but neither the general reader nor the college student feels any embarrassment when the public discovers his ignorance of these worthies. But the teacher of literature, after his class has made a rapid survey of the whole field of English literature, is almost painfully embarrassed to learn from his students that Byron was blind, that Keats wrote the *Adonis* when under the influence of opium, and that Browning's *Ring and the Book* is based on Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*. He then asks himself whether it is not better to learn a few things well, or many things about the few greatest writers, than to attempt to learn so many details about the relatively unimportant?

Interest, like appetite, grows by what it feeds on. To know well the twenty great masters I have selected is likely to produce an interest that shall forever enrich and enlarge the life of the student. The great purpose of any book about literature and the makers of literature is to lead the reader to the literature itself. But to know that literature one should know the men who produced it, their philosophy of life, their limitations and aspirations, and the spirit of the age in which they lived and worked. It is hoped that this book may be one of many modern influences

in awakening, stimulating, and maintaining an interest in those great masters whose works have become the priceless heritage of all the English-speaking peoples.

No two men would likely agree on the twenty most important names in English literature. I acknowledge my choice has been made somewhat arbitrarily, but it has been made with deliberation. I have used my best judgment as influenced by a variety of reasons. I hesitate to exclude Spenser, Jonson, Bunyan, DeFoe, Addison, Fielding, Lamb, Macaulay, Stevenson, to name but a few, but to carry out my plan there had to be exclusion of even great writers. The title, *Masters of English Literature,* does not assume that these twenty are the only masters.

An "Introductory" chapter is included so as to present a very brief survey of the whole field of English literature At the end of each chapter there is a list of books and magazine articles. It is hoped that these reference lists will be especially helpful to those who wish to make a fuller study of the author. Instead of inserting separate chapters on the literary movements and tendencies of the age, I have included such matter in the body of the biographical and critical comment on each author.

Lest by the unthinking I may be charged with lack of appreciation of the names of Hawthorne and Longfellow, of Poe and Emerson, may I add that this book aims to cover only the British field?

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MASTERS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

Introduction

What Is Literature?—There is no generally accepted definition of literature, for literature like religion is hard to define. One could collect several hundred definitions of literature or religion, but any conception of either of these subjects based exclusively on a single brief definition would be most inadequate. The line of demarcation between what is and what is not literature has never been sharply drawn. We feel that neither a city directory nor even a dictionary should be classed as literature. Charles Lamb went so far as to exclude the writings of Hume, Gibbon, and Josephus, together with "draughtboards bound and lettered on the back." But Hallam would include works on jurisprudence, theology, and medicine. Professor W. H. Hudson writes:

> "Literature is composed of those books, and of those books only, which, in the first place, by reason of their subject-matter and their mode of treating it, are of general human interest; and in which, in the second place, the element of form and the pleasure which form gives are to be regarded as essential."

In other words, the substance must be of wide interest, the form must be artistic. "The object of literature is Delight," says Mr. Saintsbury, "its soul is Imagination, its body is Style." Making use of Matthew Arnold's definition of the means of culture, we may say that literature is the record of the best that has been said and thought in the world. And then to this it may be well to add what Wordsworth said of poetry, making the

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application to literature in general, it is "the breath and finer spirit of knowledge."

An Expression of Life. — Literature is the expression of life, and as life is infinitely varied and complex so literature manifests itself in a great variety of form and substance. Diversity of national ideals has produced diversity in the literatures of different nations. The high seriousness of the Hebrew, the joyous spontaneity of the Greek, the sparkling clarity of the French, the ethical earnestness of the English, are reflected in their respective literatures.

The life of a nation varies with the centuries, these variations are also reflected in its literature. Dryden, Swift, and Pope reproduce the life and spirit of their period, just as Shakspere bears the impress of the Elizabethans. And as no two men see life from exactly the same angle, we may have in the same epoch a poet of doubt like Matthew Arnold, and a poet of optimism like Browning.

Why Study Literature?—To be cultured is to know ourselves and the world. Shelley has called the poets "the hierophants of an unapprehended revelation." The makers of literature are the interpreters of the inner life of the soul and the revealers of the outer world of nature. Literature helps man to see that his individual experience is part of the universal. It gives voice to the soul that is struggling for self-expression. The murkiness and fog of the prison-house, breeders of a morbid sentimentalism, are shot through by the "light that never was, on sea or land," until they are clarified and purified. There is an

> "Innermost
> Of the inmost, most interior of the interne,"

where dwells the Spirit that giveth life. This Spirit is quickened by a sympathetic appreciation of literature.

Then, too, literature aids in the revealing of this wonderful external world of ours. This is allied to the first aim, for the internal and external are a unit. I know myself only by knowing the world. Cries Fra Lippo Lippi,

"You've seen the world —
The beauty, and the wonder, and the power,
The shapes of things, their colors, lights, and shades,
Changes, surprises — and God made it all!"

The old theological notion that this world is but a dismal place, a vale of tears where man is but a pilgrim for a night, has largely disappeared. Science has done much in bringing to our notice the wonder and power of our external world; but the poets, like Chaucer, Shakspere, and Wordsworth, have been the hierophants who have revealed to the heart of man the marvelous beauty of the visible universe. The spiritual interpretation of nature has come through the artist rather than through the scientist. The eye of the poet may not see so minutely as the microscope of the scientist, but it sees as truly. The wonders of the microscope and scalpel are niggardly in comparison with the revelations of the unaided eye. Clouds, rivers, mountains, the blue of sky and sea, the glories of sunrises and sunsets, the common aspects of trees and flowers, are, to say the least, as wonderful and helpful in the interpretation of life as the cross-section of a frog's leg, even though it be magnified and thrown upon the screen.

Part of this external world which we must know, if we would be cultured, is the rich world of humanity. Deeper and more mysterious than the "unplumbed, salt, estranging sea" is the heart of humanity. The great masters of literature present to us the types of the past and present. Writing of art George Eliot said, "It is the nearest thing to life; it is a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellowmen beyond the bounds of our personal lot." The thought is especially applicable to literature. Our lives have been enlarged and enriched by having dreamed of Utopia with More, soliloquized with Hamlet, laughed with Falstaff, raged with Lear, walked the mountain-side with Wordsworth, traced the consequences of a single deed with George Eliot, sailed the seas of romance with Stevenson, or sought for the Holy Grail with Tennyson.

The Periods of English Literature.—This is one of the simplest divisions that we can make of the whole field of English literature:

1. The Anglo-Saxon, or Early English Period.
2. The Middle English Period.
3. The Elizabethan Age.
4. The Puritan Period.
5. The Restoration Period.
6. The Age of Classicism.
7. The Age of Romanticism.
8. The Victorian Age.

While such a division is serviceable in characterizing the great movements that have given English literature its individuality, it must be remembered that no age can be fully described by an epithet or phrase, and that this simple division, while emphasizing the great movements, does not take account of the intervening periods.

The Anglo-Saxon Period antedates the age of Chaucer and Wiclif. The language in which the literature of that period was written is as difficult for the English reader to learn as would be German or French. *Beowulf* is the great poem of this period. When it was written or composed we do not know, perhaps long before the Teutonic races passed from the Continent to England. It is a noble poem picturing the life of a crude race of fighters and feasters, lovers of the sea and of the vigorous life of adventurers. Much later in time but placed in the same period are the names of Cædmon, Cynewulf, Bede, and Alfred. Scholars, especially in England, America, and Germany, have spent their lives in studying the literature associated with these names, and their study has been fruitful in bringing us historical, philological, and antiquarian lore, but the subject matter, the intrinsic substance, does not entitle it to rank high in the world's literature. Were we to lose all of Anglo-Saxon literature we should suffer an incalculable loss with respect to our knowledge of the language and customs and habits of thought of the ancestors of the English

people; but, of great inspiring contributions to the world's literature, there would be little loss.

The Middle English Period is made notable by the names of Chaucer, Wiclif, Gower, Langland, and Malory, but all of these names belong to the latter part of the period. Before their times there had been produced a host of metrical romances and homiletic verse. The people of England did not use a homogeneous language. In addition to the many dialects of the common people there were the Anglo-Latin of the church and the Norman-French of the court. As London became the political and commercial center of the kingdom, the Midland dialect gained the supremacy. As Chaucer is the subject of the next chapter, we need not now discuss the influence of this notable poet.

The Elizabethan Era is the period glorified by the colossal achievement of Shakspere. He was fortunate in living in an age when the great influences of the Reformation and the Renaissance were quickening English life. By way of Italy and France came the learning of ancient Rome and Athens; while modern Italy contributed poetry, fiction, and the drama, which reappeared in new English forms of tragedy, allegory, song, pastoral, and sonnet. English prose had not yet attained simplicity of diction. Euphuisms and perversions of style prevailed. A fuller discussion of this remarkable period will be found in the chapter on Shakspere. We need but add that this period would be noteworthy even without the name of Shakspere, for in it are included the dramas of Ben Jonson, Chapman, Dekker and Heywood, Middleton and Webster, Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher, and the brilliant Marlowe; in pure poesy we have Spenser, and in prose More's *Utopia,* Ascham's *Schoolmaster,* and Holinshed's *Chronicles.*

The Puritan Period. — If the Elizabethan Period was marked by the Renaissance of the intellect, the Puritan age was marked by the Rebirth of the moral nature, for this was the time when occurred "that greatest moral and political reform which ever swept over a nation in the short space of half a century." Liberty with the righteousness that exalteth a nation

was the ideal of the Puritan. It is an age which cannot be sharply defined, for at one end it overlaps the Elizabethan and at the other the Restoration Period. In spirit, however, it is sharply defined. The exuberant vitality of the Elizabethans, expressing itself in sonnet, lyric, masque, and drama, has given place to the passionate seriousness of the religious and polemic Puritan. In *Paradise Lost* the deep moral earnestness of the age finds its immortal expression.

The Restoration Period. — With the return of the monarchy, 1660, there was an intense reaction against the strictness of the Puritan ideals. The Restoration Period in English literature is the reflection of the gay, irresponsible, indecent portion of English life which now gathered about a dissolute king and his court. French literature as embodied in Racine, Molière, La Fontaine, and Bossuet dominated English ideals. The Latin and Greek classics passed into England through the modernizing influence of Boileau and his school of critics. About the court buzzed the wits who complimented and amused the king.

"Poetry . . . became gallant and social, and also personal and partisan; and satire was soon its most vital form. . . . Prose came nearer to living speech, it became more civil and natural and persuasive."

The prose of Dryden and Bunyan shows a simplicity and clearness which had been hitherto lacking in English literature. The great name of this period is that of Dryden. His influence on English prose especially was altogether good. As a dramatist, in spite of some excellent work, he does not rise above the level of his age. His comedies smack of the vulgarity and shallow gayety of his contemporaries, Wycherley, Congreve, and Vanbrugh.

The Age of Classicism, or the Augustan Age, as it is sometimes called, includes the celebrated names of Swift, Pope, DeFoe, Goldsmith, Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, Addison, Steele, Locke, Gibbon, Burke, and Johnson. With the beginning of the eighteenth century all classes began to read.

There was a demand for new types of literature. The light essay, the biography, tales of adventure, history, and finally the novel appeared and gave a variety to a literature which had usually been limited to poetry, the drama, and political and theological prose. Perhaps the most important of all the groups of the famous men of this period, at least with reference to the influence their work has exerted on the stream of English literature, is the quartet of novelists — Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne. These four "first thoroughly fertilized this important field." But as purely literary forces no names stand higher than those of Swift, Pope, and Johnson. In the three chapters which deal with these men, the spirit of the Age of Classicism will be more fully explained.

The Romantic Age had its beginnings long before the dawn of the nineteenth century. Thomson, Burns, and Cowper produced a poetry very different from the formal classicism of the school of Pope. The most significant event in modern times is the French Revolution. Literature, a reflection of life, could not escape the far-reaching influences of that upheaval. The same influences that resulted in the breaking away from political traditions led to the breaking away from literary traditions. Individualism became the dominant note. Byron, Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, and Wordsworth in poetry; Scott and Jane Austen in fiction; Lamb and De Quincey in the essay — each followed the bent of his genius, producing a literature as rich as it was at times bewildering in its infinite variety.

What is romanticism? In its best sense romanticism is, in the language of Victor Hugo, "liberalism in literature;" in a less noble sense it is a "morbid and restless intensification of the personal emotions." An American critic, Paul Elmer More, referring especially to the tendencies of the twentieth century, has defined it as "the infinitely craving personality, the usurpation of emotion over reason, the idealization of love, the confusion of the sensuous and the spiritual."

The Victorian Era. — The growth of democracy and the achievements of science are the two impressive characteristics

of that large portion of the nineteenth century often called the Victorian Era. It might appear that while the spirit of democracy has found free and forceful expression in poetry and prose, the achievements of science, as exemplified in steam and electricity, in surgery and medicine, have not found expression in literature. This is, however, taking too narrow a view of science, for the theory of evolution must be included among the achievements of science, and, whether true or false, this theory has influenced art and literature. It might be expected that Huxley and Spencer, scientists who had preeminently the gift of expression, would emphasize the idea of development under law, but Tennyson, the poet, Carlyle, the historian, and George Eliot, the novelist, have emphasized the same idea.

In poetry, Tennyson and Browning are the names that lead all the rest; but this period is also enriched by Matthew Arnold, Swinburne, Morris, and Rossetti, and a score of lesser names; in fiction we find the great names of Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot, closely followed by Kingsley, Charlotte Brontë, Trollope, Reade, Meredith, Stevenson, and Hardy; in prose other than fiction we find Macaulay, Carlyle, Ruskin, Newman, Mill, Froude, Pater, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, and Wallace.

As we look back over the achievements of the nineteenth century, impressed by the notable list of talented men and women who have given literary distinction to that period, we ask ourselves whether our own age is not pitifully barren of productive genius. Time, however, is the great critic. In the words of Mr. Gosse, "As time passes on, it takes the sheep and goats of literature and gradually divides them. The latter are very numerous, and they are allowed to escape on the open moors of oblivion, whence they never return." Five centuries from now the many great names of the Victorian Era may be reduced to but one or two. In the dome of the National Gallery of London there is this sobering inscription, "The works of those who have stood the test of ages have a claim to that respect and veneration to which no modern can pretend."

We are too close to our own age to estimate its literary

value. There are those who think we have fallen into decadent times, that commercialism and utilitarianism have absorbed the creative energies of man and clipt the wings of poesy. On the other hand, there are many who with Keats believe

"The poetry of earth is never dead,"

and that the same spirit of self-expression which has always characterized the English-speaking nations shall continue to impel their daughters to prophesy, their old men to dream dreams, and their young men to see visions.

CHAPTER II

Chaucer

"Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
Preluded those melodious bursts that fill
The spacious times of great Elizabeth
With sounds that echo still."

SO sings Tennyson of him who is indeed the first of that long and distinguished line of great English poets who are the glory of English literature; first in time, and among the first in power. We know, to be sure, that there were poets before Chaucer, just as there were dramatists before Shakspere and painters before Raphael, but Chaucer so far transcends all English writers before his time that there is no second even *longo intervallo*. He stands a towering mountain peak in the wide expanse of several centuries of mediocrity.

Birth and Early Days.—Every statement of fact about Chaucer, as in the case of Shakspere, has given rise to controversy, and nothing has been the subject of more controversy than the date of his birth. The inscription by his grave in Westminster Abbey records the day, month, and year of his death (October 25, 1400); that there is no mention of the date of his birth would seem to indicate that when the inscription was placed there the exact date was not known. For many years 1328 was the date given because Speght, whose biography of the poet appeared in 1598, almost two hundred years after the death of Chaucer, wrote, "in the day of our Lord 1400, after he had lived about seventy-two years." Then in Urry's edition of Chaucer's works, 1721, the actual mention of 1328 occurs. As an example of the zeal of scholarship, it would be interesting to follow the processes by which this date was altered to 1340, but to present the facts and arguments in full would require many

pages. The exact date is still undetermined. Lounsbury concludes his full discussion with saying,

"My own conviction is strong that the weight of the evidence we have is decidedly in favor of a year considerably earlier than 1340 as that of the poet's birth. A time between 1331 and 1335 would be in satisfactory accordance with all the conditions that are implied in the references made to his age by Chaucer himself or by his contemporaries."

Tradition places his birth in London. His father and grandfather were vintners, John, the father, probably enjoying the fruits of a good business. Brought up in surroundings not especially conducive to abstinence, and living in a time when cold water as a beverage was considered injurious, the poet might easily have fallen into that conviviality which has ruined so many budding geniuses. In the *Pardoner* we have an invective against drunkenness, and we may attribute to Chaucer himself the practice and precept which we find in *Troilus and Criseyde*—

"In every thing, I wot, there lies measure:
For though a man forbid all drunkenness,
He biddeth not that every creature,
Be drinkless altogether, as I guess."

Military Service.—What schools he attended and what teachers he had, we do not know. The great English universities, Oxford and Cambridge, were flourishing in his day, and it is pleasant to think of him as attending one of them, but although he mentions both Oxford and Cambridge, not a particle of evidence has ever been produced to show that he attended either. In 1357 we hear of him as serving in the household of Lionel, the third son of the king, Edward III. About 1359 he went into military service; it was then that the king made his last military expedition into France. Froissart tells us how the army took grain and mills to grind the grain, ovens to bake, and smithies to forge.

Chaucer became a prisoner of war; on the 1st of March, 1360, Edward III contributed £16 towards his ransom. Whether

this amount is a part or the whole of the ransom is not known. As money then had about ten times the purchasing power of today, the amount would be equal to $800.

Public Service.—During his life three kings occupied the English throne, Edward III, Richard II, and Henry IV. He was on good terms with each of them. His activity in public affairs is attested by his numerous missions to the continent, for during the ten years beginning with 1370 he made six or seven official trips to the mainland. From 1374 to 1386 he held the office of controller of the customs and subsidy of wools, skins, and tanned hides in the port of London, and in 1386 he was elected to Parliament for the county of Kent. On September 6, 1390, he was robbed of £20 and horse by highwaymen—two separate thefts on the same day; by a writ of January 6, 1391, he was freed from the obligation of making repayment to the state of the stolen money. In 1394 he received a grant of £20 a year for life. As it is on record that several times he drew his allowance, or part of it, in advance, he likely had that unfortunate characteristic which seems to be the lot of most poets—improvidence. When Henry IV came to the throne in 1399, an addition of forty marks yearly was made to the £20 previously granted under Richard II. On December 24, when, whether born a few years later or earlier than the supposed date of his birth, he was approaching old age, he leased a house for fifty-three years or "less if he dies sooner." On February 21, 1400, he drew his pension in person, and so must have been in the enjoyment of health sufficiently good to enable him to move about; but some months later, October 25, 1400, he died, if there is truth in the record on his tombstone. He was buried in Westminster Abbey—the first, and for centuries the only man of letters to rest in that stately edifice which has since become the Valhalla of the princes of English poetry.

This rapid survey of the public career of Chaucer shows him as a man of affairs. He was not a cloistered recluse, evolving from his inner consciousness a theory of life, but an active man of the world, who studied life at first-hand.

The inscription on his grave reads:

M. S.
Qui fuit Anglorum vates ter maximus olim,
GALFRIDUS CHAUCERUS conditur hoc tumulo:
Annum si quaeras Domini, si tempora vitae
Ecce notae subsunt, quae tibi cuncta notant.
25 Octobris 1400.
Ærumnarum requies mors.
N. Brigham hos fecit musarum nomine sumptus
1556.

Marriage.— There is some evidence to the effect that he married about 1366, and that his married life extended over a period of twenty years. Who Philippa, his wife, was is a much disputed question. Speght thinks she was a sister of Katharine, who as the widow of Sir Hugh Swynford became the third wife of John of Gaunt; if this be true it might help to explain Chaucer's close relationship with court affairs, for John of Gaunt was the son of Edward III. That he had a son, Lewis, we know from his *Astrolabe,* prepared for the instruction of his boy. There is a Thomas Chaucer who died in 1434, a man of some wealth and prominence, but there is no evidence to show that he was the son of the poet.

Three Literary Periods.— His literary life is usually divided into three well-defined periods; the first, extending to 1370, is marked by French influence; the second, ending with 1385, shows the influence of Italian writers; and the third, or English period, ends with his death.

French influence naturally came first, since the court of Edward III was essentially a French court, and Chaucer as a youth lived in its environment. When he joined the English army invading France, he saw war as carried on with chivalry and knighthood at their highest degree of outward splendor. On his return to England he translated the *Roman de la Rose,* the most famous work in French at that time. Of this translation some 2000 lines remain. This work had a profound influence upon Chaucer and during its ascendency he wrote "ballads, roundels, and virelays." The most important of these minor

works was the *Book of the Duchesse,* written to lighten the bereavement of John of Gaunt for the death of his wife.

It may be said that the *Roman de la Rose* was the work of two French poets, Guillaume de Lorris, who wrote the first part of the poem between 1225 and 1230, and Jean de Meun, who wrote between 1268 and 1277. The former was not a great poet, but he was an idealist and purist, while Jean de Meun was a realist and revolutionist. The influence of both is seen in Chaucer's poetry.

The *Italian Period* was possibly brought about by Chaucer's many missions to the Continent, for, as has been said, during the ten years beginning with 1370 he made six or seven official journeys to various Courts in Europe. It is but natural to believe that the great Italian literature would attract a gifted mind like Chaucer's. Petrarch, Dante, and Boccaccio present a trio of literary power and influence to whose guidance our aspiring poet might well yield himself. The first poem produced after the Italian influence had set in was *The Parlement of Foules,* written in 1382 in honor of the marriage of King Richard to Lady Anne of Bohemia. Like most poems of the time it was of the dream-vision type. The sources show a two-fold influence, that of the departing Medieval Age and that of the new Italian culture. In general structure it resembles the *Book of the Duchesse,* and in its treatment of birds who speak like men it foreshadows the *Nun's Priest's Tale. Troilus and Criseyde,* considered by some to be his masterpiece, also belongs to this period. The poem is so long, occupying 264 pages in Skeat's edition, and at times so tedious, that it has never enjoyed the popularity which has fallen to the *Canterbury Tales.*

"Troilus is a lovesick boy who takes a beautiful but worthless woman for an angel of heaven. Pandarus is a middle-aged busybody who, unsuccessful in his own loves, undertakes to manage the loves of others. Criseyde is the artistic center of the story, and on the strange complexity of her double nature Chaucer has expended his best energies, adding of his own invention two episodes which wholly alter the conception of her character."

The immediate source of the poem was Boccaccio's *Filostrato.*

The House of Fame, placed also in the period of Italian influence, is interesting because in it we have a fuller revelation of the personality of the poet than in any other poem. "This poem," said Warton, "contains great strokes of Gothic imagination, yet bordering often on the most ideal and capricious extravagance." *The Legend of Good Women* belongs to the ending of the Italian influence and the beginning of the third or English period. While the prolog itself is interesting as a revelation of Chaucer's personality, the tales themselves are told without the charm and enthusiasm that we expect from the author of the *Canterbury Tales.* The stories are taken from various sources such as the *Heroides* of Ovid and the *De Claribus Mulieribus* of Boccaccio. This poem, like all his long poems with the exception of *Troilus and Criseyde,* was left incomplete. There are nine legends, among which are the stories of Dido, Thisbe, Cleopatra, and Lucretia.

The full measure of Chaucer's greatness is found in the maturity of his third or *English Period.* To this period belongs his *Canterbury Tales.* He has served his apprenticeship by translating French poetry, by studying Italian models, now he casts aside these aids and gives full expression to the life of his own country and time.

"He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote
The Canterbury Tales, and his old age
Made beautiful with song; and as I read
I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note
Of lark and linnet, and from every page
Rise odors of ploughed field or flowery mead."
—*Longfellow.*

*Canterbury Tales.** — Of the beginning of *The Prologue* of the *Canterbury Tales* Lowell writes:

* The simplest rule for the pronunciation of Chaucer is Skeat's: "Pronounce the words *as they are spelt,* but with the Italian vowel-sounds and the German final *e,* and you will come very near the truth." It is also well to remember that when *e* is the last letter of a line, it should be lightly pronounced.

"There is a pervading wholesomeness in the writings of this man — a vernal property that soothes and refreshes in a way of which no other has ever found the secret. I repeat to myself a thousand times —

'Whan that Aprille with his shoures soote,' etc.,

and still at the thousandth time a breath of uncontaminate spring-tide seems to lift the hair upon my forehead."

Chaucer's pilgrims meet by chance at the Tabard Inn of Southwark, a place just across the river from London from which travelers started on their jaunt to Canterbury;

"At nyght were come into that hostelrye
Wel nyne-and-twenty in a compaignye, . . ."

and the poet gives us in the *Prologue* an interesting, lifelike characterization of the miscellaneous company. There is the Knight who has traveled much and endured much. Noble in port and manner

"He was a verray parfit, gentle knight;"

the Squire, his young son, twenty years of age and "as fresh as is the monthe of May"; a brown-visaged Yeoman; a Nun —

"She was so charitable and so pitous
She wolde wepe if that she saugh a mous
Kaught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde;"

a jovial Monk who refuses to study too hard for fear he might go mad, and Chaucer smilingly thinks his opinion is good; a Friar who cared more for the pleasures of this world than the joys of the next; the Merchant with his forked beard; the likeable Clerk of Oxenford who cared more for books than for money —

"Sownynge in moral vertu was his speche,
And gladly wolde he lerne and gladly teche;"

the bustling Sergeant-at-law —

"Nowhere so bisy a man as he ther nas,
And yet he semed bisier than he was;"

the Franklin, the true disciple of Epicurus; the Cook with gan-

rene on his shin; the Shipman; the Physician; the brawny Wife of Bathe—

"Boold was hir face and faire and reed of hewe;"

he Parish Priest; the Plowman; the Miller blowing his bagpipe s the procession moved out of town; the Manciple; the Reeve, a sclendre colerik man"; the loud-mouthed Summoner; the gen-le Pardoner; the self-important host of the Tabard—of such vas the company composed.

The loquacious and merry host of the Tabard suggests to his uests that instead of riding to Canterbury as "doumb as a tone,"

"That eche of yow to shorte with your weye,
In this viage shal telle tales tweye,—
To Caunterburyward, I mean it so,
And homward he shal tellen othere two;"

nd that the one who tells the best story shall receive a fine upper on their return at the cost of the others. Accordingly n the morrow when the pilgrims wend their way towards the hrine of Thomas à Becket, the first tale is told by the Knight, vho has drawn the shortest cut.

The Tales.—Had Chaucer carried out his original plan we hould have about one hundred and twenty stories, for each erson was to tell two as the pilgrims went to Canterbury and wo more as they returned. But Chaucer's pilgrims do not enter he city of the sacred shrine; they take us with them until we atch a glimpse of the distant towers, but what happens when ney enter the city, or how they journey homeward, we know ot. We have less than a quarter of the number of tales orig-nally planned, for not every one in *The Prologue* tells a story.

After the pilgrims had ridden two miles away from the abard Inn of Southwark the jovial host reminds the company f the agreement made the previous night—

"If even-song and morwe-song acorde,
Lat see now who shal telle the firste tale,
As ever mote I drinke wyn or ale,

Who-so be rebel to my Jugement
Shal paye for al that by the weye is spent."

The lot to tell the first story falls upon the Knight, the dignified and worthy aristocrat, whose station naturally gave him precedence.

The *Knight's Tale* is taken from the *Teseide* of Boccaccio for Chaucer, like Shakspere, did not hesitate to borrow freely Chaucer adapts and modifies to suit his own purpose. The *Teseide* is a poem of almost 10,000 lines; the *Knight's Tale* has but 2250 lines. The tale deals in a romantic spirit with the love for Emily of two close friends who are also kinsmen, Palamon and Arcite; the fourth character of importance being Duke Theseus. When Palamon and Arcite from their prison window behold the lovely Emily, they are stricken with love. Their vow of perpetual brotherhood receives a rude shock. The matter-of-fact Arcite is the first to realize that

"Love is a gretter lawe, by my pan,*
Than may be yeve† to any erthly man."

Writes Mr. Root:

"As for Emily, she is a fair vision of womanly beauty and grace, and little more. Only once in the whole story, and that when the story is more than half done, in her prayer to Diana, do we hear Emily speak. . . . We see her beauty and recognize her worth, realizing that the love of her may well be strong enough to break the friendship of a life; and yet we know her not at all. She is the golden apple of strife, . . . but she *does* nothing Theseus is the motive power of the plot; his acts and decisions really determine the whole story."

Arcite is released from prison, but ordered to flee the country; this he does, but his love for Emily draws him back in disguise; then after a year or two Palamon is released also The two former friends meet and agree to decide by a duel on the right of the one or the other to the love of Emily. This plan is discovered by Duke Theseus, who in his anger at first condemns them to death, but upon the intercession of his queen

* skull † given

and Emily it is decided that a tournament is to be the means by which the decision is to be rendered. Chaucer describes the tournament in which Arcite meets death through an accident. The story ends with the marriage of Palamon and Emily.

The *Knight's Tale* is not, like *The Prologue,* preeminent because of its power of characterization; its chief charm lies in its beauty of description. The vernal freshness of this poet of the dawn of English literature is well illustrated in passages like this:

> "The bisy larke, messager of day,
> Salueth in hir song the morwe gray,
> And firy Phebus riseth up so brighte
> That all the orient laugheth of the lighte,
> And with hise stremes dryeth in the greves*
> The silver dropes, hangynge on the leves."

When the Knight's story of love and romance has been ended, the Host, who acts as leader of the company, turns to the Monk for a story. The Monk is likely second in rank to the Knight, but, as his story ought to be a serious one, Chaucer causes the drunken Miller to break in with a request that he be allowed to tell his story at this time. This he is permitted to do. After the Miller's coarse story a similar one is told by the Reeve. Then follows the Cook's — a story interrupted at the end of the fifty-eighth line and never finished. The Man of Law follows with the story of Constance, the brave woman who passes from prosperity to adversity, who is always an exemplar of the finest Christian virtues. Of her Ten Brink writes:

> "The heroine here appears almost a personification of Christianity itself, such as it comes to heathen nations, is maligned and persecuted, yet, in the strength of its Founder, endures in patience and finally remains victorious."

At the conclusion of the story of Constance the Host stands up in his stirrups and cries,

> "This was a thrifty tale for the nones!"

Then he turns to the parish priest for a tale. The parson objects

* groves

to the profanity with which the Host has ornamented his request —

> "The Persone him answerde, 'benedicite!'
> What eyleth the man so sinfully to swere?"

Instead of a tale from the priest we now have one from the Shipman; then the Prioress tells the miraculous story of Hugh of Lincoln, the little martyr, who, after his throat had been cut and his body thrown into a pit, sweetly sings *O Alma Redemptoris.*

One of the most interesting episodes follows the tale of the Prioress. The Host turns to Chaucer himself

> "And seyde thus, 'what man artow?'* quod he;
> 'Thou lokest as thou woldest finde an hare,
> For ever upon the ground I see the stare.'"

Like the Host, we expect Chaucer to surpass all the rest in his story-telling. But Chaucer, either from modesty or from a keen sense of the humorous, inflicts the company with the *Tale of Sir Thopas,* a bit of doggerel that provokes the Host, after over two hundred lines have been recited, to interrupt with

> "No more of this, for goddes dignitee,"

Chaucer accepts the interruption in good grace and then tells in prose the *Tale of Melibeus,* a dull story translated from the French.

So the stories run on, with here and there an interruption or interlude to keep us informed of the progress of the pilgrims as they journey to Canterbury. Among the best that follow are those by the Nun's Priest, the Wife of Bath, and the Clerk.

The England of Chaucer. — Chaucer's England, the England of more than five hundred years ago, in manners, customs, social usages, commerce, national activities, and national consciousness, was a very different England from that of today. But it was by no means an inert and decadent England, for sane and vigorous poetry, such as Chaucer's, does not flourish in periods of

*art thou

national stagnation. To the alert mind of that time the great world-movements in commerce, government, and religion furnished that stimulus which is needed for the development of a full personality. Chaucer's life was

"co-eval with the brilliant reign of Edward III and its inglorious close; with Cressy and Poictiers; with the terrible ravages of the Black Death; with the premonitory throes of the Protestant Reformation; . . . with the great insurrection of the peasantry; and with the deposition of Richard II."*

It was the age of the Black Prince, of John of Gaunt, of Bolingbroke, of Prince Hal, and of that imaginary character, Shakspere's greatest comic creation — Falstaff; the age of the vision of Piers the Plowman; of John Wiclif, the reformer and translator of the Bible. While not so spectacular in conquest nor so brilliant in literature as the unparalleled Elizabethan period with its Spanish Armada and its Shakspere, it was nevertheless an age of tremendous import in the development of English nationality.

Among the most significant movements was the drift towards the literary use of the English language. With the coming of William the Conqueror had come the use of the French language. English was the language of the conquered; the church and the court used Latin and French; consequently the vernacular became a despised tongue. But the common people kept on using their native speech, and gradually the conquered overcame the conquerors. For a century or more the political and social separation of France and England had been going on; Frenchmen were told to consider France their country, while Englishmen would give allegiance to England alone. Chaucer's use of English is but part of a general movement towards the widespread adoption of the vernacular for all purposes. Wiclif reached the common people by his translation of the Bible into a language that could be understood by the layman. The speech of the aristocratic knight and the learned priest gave way to the speech of the common people.

* Green.

"Let clerks indite in Latin [writes the author of the *Testament of Love*], and the Frenchmen in their French also indite their quaint terms, for it is kindly to their mouths; and let us show our fantasies in such words as we learned of our mother's tongue."

To mark the exact time when medievalism ceases and modern history begins is an impossibility; but we may characterize the fourteenth century as the transition period, the time when the medieval and the modern spirit are coming into conflict. The spirit of medievalism fostered socialism, monasteries, monarchies, and one Papal center; the new spirit, the Renaissance, encouraged individualism, Protestantism, and democracy. Mr. Root in his *The Poetry of Chaucer,* while discussing medievalism and the Renaissance, writes:

"The fundamental distinction, I think, lies in the fact that the medieval mind has its gaze fixed on the spiritual and abstract, that of the Renaissance on the sensuous and concrete. 'Medievalism proclaims that the eternal things of the spirit are alone worth while; the Renaissance declares that a man's life consists, if not in the abundance of the things he possesses, at any rate in the abundance and variety of sensations he enjoys.'"

Dante may be given as an illustration of the spirit of medievalism, and Shakspere as the representative of the modern spirit. Chaucer, with his pictures of real men and women, is of the type of Shakspere.

The Learning of Chaucer.—Is Chaucer a learned poet? For many years this question was answered with a decided affirmative, but modern scholarship hesitates to call him learned, though in denying this attribute no disparagement of his poetic quality is intended, for learning and creative poetic genius may have little in common. However, his early biographers placed no limit to his profound and comprehensive learning. Leland tells us that Chaucer left the university a logician, orator, poet, philosopher, and mathematician; and, as if this were not sufficient glory, adds that he was also a devout theologian.

"To attain eminence in any one of these departments of study is of itself sufficient to confer immortality upon most men. According to his earliest biographers, Chaucer attained eminence in them all."

Although even Milton calls him "our learned Chaucer," his learning is rather a matter of unfounded tradition than of fact. Compared with the lay ignorance of his time, he was learned, but not in the sense in which Milton himself was a learned man. Chaucer lived at a time when "a great scholar was expected to know not merely something of everything, but everything of everything." This ideal may be at least as rational as the modern theory which with its emphasis on technical specialization has a tendency to produce "intensive knowledge of one thing with extensive ignorance of everything," but it does not yield the first requisite of scholarship — accuracy. That Chaucer is lacking in accuracy is proved by the internal testimony of his own extensive compositions.

But we must not infer that Chaucer was unacquainted with the learning of his age. Latin and French were known to all educated men of his time. In addition to these he also knew Italian; but his knowledge was that of the man of letters, of the artist who reads for pleasure, for a study of the art of the writer, and for insight into life. The French writers whom he knew are now forgotten, save by the specialist in literature, but the Italian are the great names of Petrarch, Dante, and Boccaccio. Of these three he was most familiar with Boccaccio; with his poetry rather than with his prose. Mr. Lounsbury places himself on record as believing that there is "not a particle of evidence that Chaucer had ever seen or read a line of the *Decameron*." Nor is there any foundation for the report that the *Canterbury Tales* is founded upon the plan of the *Decameron*. This collection appeared in 1353, but, as books traveled slowly in those days, Chaucer may never have seen Boccaccio's prose masterpiece. As Boccaccio's name is never mentioned in Chaucer's writings, it is the opinion of some critics that Chaucer knew the writings but did not know anything of the author.

Chaucer had some acquaintance with the writings of Dante, but not such extensive acquaintance as has been attributed to him by Dantean scholars. The *Canterbury Tales* contains but three references. In *Troilus and Criseyde* occur three lines

reminding us of that passage in Dante which Tennyson has made familiar through his *Locksley Hall*—

> "This is truth the poet sings,
> That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things."

Chaucer's version is,

> "For of Fortune's sharp adversity,
> The worste kind of infortune is this,
> A man to have been in prosperity,
> And it remember when it passed is."

But as Dante likely followed Boethius, and as Chaucer was more familiar with Boethius than with Dante, it is hardly fair to cite this passage as an illustration of Chaucer's acquaintance with Dante.

Critics such as Ten Brink and Skeat think that *The House of Fame* is the poem showing the strongest traces of Dante's influence, but Lounsbury thinks his whole indebtedness cannot exceed twenty lines.

Chaucer's acquaintance with ancient writers ranges from the familiar names of Vergil, Ovid, Horace, and Juvenal to the less known Florus, Valerius Maximus, and Macrobius. He names Cicero but twice, and Livy but five times and then always in connection with the same story from Livy. He had read the legends connected with the great centers of heroic deeds — Alexander the Great, Charlemagne, King Arthur, and above all, with the Trojan War, with the events of which he seems to be thoroughly familiar.

Views on Religion.—It is hard to draw a correct inference from his writings as to just what his views on religion were. The time in which he lived was not conducive to open-mindedness and free expression. Even today in some communities there is little tolerance of free discussion of religious topics. In Chaucer's day the path of free expression was beset with many pitfalls. Some have said that he was a follower of Wiclif, because he ridicules the foibles of the monks and exposes the hypocrisies of the priests. But this is no proof, for Langland and Gower, who

were of the Church, attack that institution. Chaucer was a man of the world, preaching the gospel of joyful living; perhaps somewhat skeptical regarding those matters which theologians and priests might deem essential, but yet broad enough to appreciate the efforts of those who were trying to improve the condition of the sons of men on earth. No one has more sympathetically portrayed the character of the good pastor than Chaucer in his delineation in *The Prologue* of the parish priest — a passage that does not suffer in comparison with the later portrayal by Goldsmith in *The Deserted Village*. It is the passage beginning with:

> "A good man was ther of religioun
> And was a Poure Persoun of a Toun;"

And ending with that wonderful touch of genius:

> "But Cristes loore, and his Apostles twelve,
> He taughte, but first he folwed it hym selve."

In the last two lines we have the very quintessence of the method which if followed will regenerate the world.

Chaucer's temper is not that of the argumentative reformer; unlike Milton he is not a controversialist; nor is his poetry laden with an antiquated theology. Milton is great in spite of his zeal as a reformer; Chaucer is great because he portrays the world of men as they are, not as he might think they ought to be. Lowell writes:

> "If character may be divined from works, he was a good man, genial, sincere, hearty, temperate of mind, more wise, perhaps, for this world than the next, but thoroughly humane, and friendly with God and men."

He seems well satisfied with the world as it is, and is pleased to describe it. And yet the very absence of the zeal of the reformer may have helped the reformers.

> "But it is a question [writes one critic] if the very absence of the qualities that excite irritation and opposition did not make him more effective in bringing about the results at which the reformers aimed than could have been accomplished by the most impassioned and flaming invectives."

In this connection a word must be added about a certain

coarseness and vulgarity found in his writings. It must be confessed that Chaucer would have done well never to have written some passages. It is not sufficient excuse to say that coarseness was a characteristic of the age in which he lived, for his apology for his plain-speaking in the prologue of the *Canterbury Tales* reveals his own consciousness of the fault, or why should he apologize? In excuse it might be said that some of the passages "most offensive to modern taste are nearly literal translations from the treatise of the Christian father" from whom Chaucer got his material. William Dean Howells in his *Literary Passions* has well said:

"The worst of the literature of past times, before an ethical conscience began to inform it, or the advance of the race compelled it to decency, is that it leaves the mind foul with filthy images and base thoughts. . . . I wish they were not there, and I hope the time will come when the beast man will be so far subdued and tamed in us that the memory of him in literature shall be left to perish; that what is lewd and ribald in the great poets shall be kept out of such editions as are meant for general reading. . . . I do not see why they should not be dropped from literature, as they were long ago dropped from the talk of decent people."

The Text of Chaucer. — We have no accurate text of Chaucer, for, as in the case of Shakspere, the writer of the poems has not given us a single page of his handwriting. We have about fifty MSS. of the *Canterbury Tales,* but most of them belong to a period of from twenty to fifty years after Chaucer's death. Even today when author and publisher take great pains to produce a book without a typographical error, a first edition without an error is a rare feat. What must have been the vexations of an author five or six hundred years ago when his MS. passed from copyist to copyist! Sometimes the copyist tried to improve Chaucer's spelling, or his grammar, or his ethics! Anticipating alterations Chaucer occasionally threw out a warning, as in his *Troilus and Criseyde:*

"And for there is so great diversity
In English, and in writing of our tongue,
So pray I God that none miswrite thee,
Ne thee mismeter for default of tongue."

And the same thought appears in the oft-quoted poem addressed to Adam the scrivener:

> "Adam Scriveyn, if ever it thee befalle,
> Boece or Troilus for to write new,
> Under thy long locks thou must have the scalle,*
> But after my making thou write more true;
> So oft a day I mote† thy work renewe,
> It to correct and eke to rub and scrape,
> And all is through thy negligence and rape.‡

But these hopes and prayers of the poet were unavailing. There are many puzzles that defy solution because of the hopeless condition of the texts. Some of these mistakes are due to the wish of the copyist to improve Chaucer, but the most puzzling are undoubtedly due to carelessness. In the *Knight's Tale* "scratching of cheeks" was changed to "scratching of chickens." In the *Clerk's Tale* occurs

> "Not only he but all his country merry
> Was for the child, and God they thank and hery."

"Hery" is an Anglo-Saxon word meaning praise, but an ignorant copyist changed this to "for he was hairy."

Yet the present text is fairly accurate, for many scholars both English and foreign have patiently compared the various MSS. and gathered information from all sources until the reader can feel assured that he has approximately the text of Chaucer. The work of Tyrwhitt, one of the greatest of English scholars, did much to remove the inaccuracies that had accumulated about the name and work of Chaucer. His edition appeared in 1775 in four volumes; a fifth volume with glossary was published in 1778. Since his time many other editions have appeared, notably those of Morris and Skeat. Professor Flügel, of Leland Stanford, Jr., University, at the time of his death, November, 1914, was editing under the auspices of the Carnegie Institution an authoritative glossary.

Rank as a Poet. — Although it is possible that Chaucer's historical position as the earliest great English poet may have

*scab †must ‡haste

some unconscious influence in our estimate of his rank, yet it would be wrong to infer that Chaucer does not intrinsically deserve a very high place among the masters of English literature. We may refuse to place him, as does F. J. Furnivall, "second only to Shakspere," but we cannot refuse him a place among the few who are close to Shakspere.

An adverse critic, the poet Bryant, thinks that Chaucer is lacking in majesty, fire, and conciseness. And Matthew Arnold considers that Chaucer's defect is the absence of "the high and excellent seriousness, which Aristotle assigns as one of the grand virtues of poetry." But this is merely saying that Chaucer does not belong to the chosen few who, like Shakspere, Dante, and Homer, are the supreme masters in literature.

A more appreciative critic, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, thinks "Chaucer is a king and inherits the earth, and expands his great soul smilingly to embrace his great heritage. Nothing is too high for him to touch with a thought, nothing too low to dower with an affection." And Mr. Lounsbury, at the conclusion of his great study of this poet, writes:

> "I am not claiming for Chaucer that he is one of the few supremest poets of the race. His station is near them, but not of them. Yet, whatever may be the rank we accord him among the writers of the world's chief literatures, the position he holds in his own literature is one that can no longer be shaken by criticism or disturbed by denial. Time has set its final seal upon the verdict of his own age, and the refusal to acknowledge his greatness has now no effect upon the opinion we have of the poet himself, but upon our opinion of those who are unable to appreciate his poetry."

What are some of the qualities that for more than five hundred years have made Chaucer one of the great and popular poets? In the first place he is an *artist*. It is puerile to think that Chaucer's versifications and the arrangement of his material into good form are the result of accident. A study of his work shows the steady development of his artistic ability. He studied and labored to subdue his thought to his modes of expression. It was not by chance that he became a master of English versification. He was also a good *story-teller*. Lowell calls him

"one of the world's three or four great story-tellers." He had a keen and loving eye for nature. Writes Mr. J. C. Shairp:

"One associates him with the green lanes and downs of Surrey and Kent, their natural copsewoods and undulating greenery. I know not that the habitual forms of English landscape, those which are most rural and most unchanged, have ever since found a truer poet, one who so brings before the mind the scene and the spirit of it uncolored by any intervention of his own thought or sentiment."

"And his favorite season—it is the May time. Of this he is never tired of singing. When there comes a really springlike day in May, the east wind gone, and the west wind blowing softly, the leaves coming out, and the birds singing, at such a season one feels instinctively this is the Chaucer atmosphere and time. He speaks of the daisy very lovingly. He turns again and again to the same flower, proving that it was a favorite with one poet before either Burns or Wordsworth."

He also has a comprehensive *sympathy* with human nature. A broad tolerance of all varieties of human kind enables him to describe with realistic accuracy the pageant of human life as it passes before his kindly but keenly observing eye. He sees both the humor and the pathos of life. But the greatest quality of all, perhaps, the quality that has served as a preservative through these five centuries, is his *wholesomeness*. In this respect he reminds one of Shakspere and Scott. We feel that these are men whom we could love even more than we admire. Chaucer had learned, as Lowell puts it, that the first business of a poet is to "burn his own smoke." There is no morbid introspection in him. To Chaucer the world was fresh and fair in its wholesome beauty; men and women were God's creatures who had inherited this wonderful world. With his healthy nature he looked out upon the world of beauty and action, where crime and catastrophe and sorrow were but interludes in the great game of life, and said, "It is good to be here."

"He listeneth to the lark
Whose song comes with the sunshine through the dark
Of painted glass in leaden lattice bound;
He listeneth and he laugheth at the sound,
Then writeth in a book like any clerk."

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CHAPTER III

Shakspere

FREDERICK THE GREAT, in an essay on German literature, expressed himself thus:

"To convince yourself of the little taste that prevails in Germany, you need only go to our theaters, where you will see the abominable works of Shakspere exhibited in German translations, while the whole audience almost die with delight as they listen to ridiculous farces worthy of American barbarians."

This is the querulous protest of a monarch whose opinion had been formed by Voltaire. Goethe, greater than Frederick or Voltaire, said, "But we cannot talk about Shakspere; everything is inadequate. . . . He is even too rich and too powerful." Ben Jonson, the greatest contemporary of Shakspere, wrote:

" . . . I confess thy writings to be such
As neither man nor muse can praise too much."

Such, too, is the verdict of three centuries of study. From Russia, Germany, France, Spain, Japan, and China comes the almost unanimous opinion that William Shakspere is the greatest literary genius of all lands and all times. As Browning sings,

"A thousand poets pried at life,
But only one amid the strife
Rose to be Shakspere."

What We Know About Shakspere.— We know much about Shakspere, and yet it is necessary for the student to distinguish carefully between fact and tradition, record and inference. The facts and records are few, the traditions and inferences are innumerable. But few as the facts are, they are more than we have of any of his literary contemporaries. The age in which he lived was not a biographical age. In a later age we find Dr. Johnson

writing the lives of the poets, then Boswell writes a voluminous life of Johnson, and next a biographer writes the life of Boswell. In Shakspere's time, kings and queens alone seemed worthy of the biographer's zeal. Then after the death of the great poet came the era of Puritanism, an era in which the theater and everything connected with it was neglected.

During the last hundred years the students and critics have more than made up for any seventeenth-century lack of interest. After a century of the most painstaking toil in search of the minutest fact bearing on the life of this poet, we have a life of Shakspere which Professor Raleigh aptly calls "a scrap heap of respectable size." These are the main facts: His baptismal record at Stratford shows that he was baptized April 26, 1564, and as children were baptized within two or three days of their birth, and because the monument inscription records April 23 as the day of his death, and as tradition said he died on his birthday, April 23 is regarded as his birthday. Twenty thousand pilgrims from all parts of the world visit the house on Henley street, and there they are shown the very room in which the poet was born; but when the poet was born, John Shakspere, the father, owned but the eastern half of the double house, acquiring the western half, the reputed birthplace, eleven years after Shakspere was born. In 1582 he married Anne Hathaway; a few years later he went to London, where he became actor, playwright, and a manager of actors and owner of shares in the Blackfriars and Globe theaters; in 1597 he bought New Place, the best residence in Stratford; he died at Stratford in 1616, and was buried in Holy Trinity Church.

Parentage.—Richard Shakspere was a tenant farmer living at Snitterfield, a hamlet four miles north of Stratford. He had two sons, Henry and John. We first hear of John in a record of April, 1552, stating that he was fined twelve pence for permitting a heap of filth to accumulate before his house in Henley street, Stratford.

"Under these unsavory circumstances does the history of the poet's father commence in the records of England. But although there was little

excuse for his negligence, . . . all that can be said to his disparagement is that he was not in advance of his neighbors in such matters, two of whom were co-incidently fined for the same offence." *

In 1557 John married Mary Arden, the daughter of a wealthy farmer who had died a few months previously. Her family belonged to the landed gentry, and no doubt the neighbors thought John Shakspere had done well in marrying Mary Arden. About her personal characteristics we know nothing, but we cannot help but think that she must have been a remarkable woman, of sound body and innate refinement, or how else could she have been the mother of a Shakspere? With his marriage to Mary Arden, John Shakspere's fortunes moved upward. During the next four years he became ale tester, burgess (petty constable), affeeror (adjuster of fines not determined by law), and city chamberlain (treasurer). In 1568 he became bailiff, and in 1571 head alderman. In signing documents John usually made a mark, but this does not imply that he was more illiterate than his neighbors; even the nobility regarded reading and writing as the accomplishment of clerks. In the Council books of the Stratford Corporation we find the name of John Shakspere 166 times, spelled in 14 different ways. Of these 166 times it is spelled Shaxspeare 69 times, and Shakspere 18 times; it is also spelled Shackspere, Shackesper, Shacksper, and Shackespere. These spellings would seem to show that the pronunciation of today is not the pronunciation heard by Shakspere himself.

Joan, Margareth, William, Gilbert, Joan (No. 2, the first having died), Anna, Richard, and Edmund were the children of John and Mary Shakspere. The first two died in infancy, Anna in her eighth year; and as Joan is the only one mentioned in Shakspere's will it is supposed that all but her had died before 1616. Joan lived until 1646, and was the mother of four children.

Education. — In Stratford the visitor of today is taken to the Grammar School and shown the very desk at which the youthful Shakspere studied. This is all very interesting, but again we are dealing with tradition, for there is no evidence that Shakspere

* Halliwell-Phillipps.

attended the Grammar School. He very likely did, for his father, during the poet's boyhood days, was in good circumstances, and besides, as town councillor, his children were entitled to free tuition. Any Stratford boy seven years old and able to read was entitled to enter. At this time the teachers were usually university men of fair scholarship, although the teaching as a rule was poor. "For one discreet and able teacher," writes Henry Peacham in the seventeenth century, "you shall find 20 ignorant and careless. . . . whereas they make one scholar, they mar ten." The school hours were from six in the morning to six in the evening during summer, and in winter from dawn to dark. Shakspere studied Latin and some Greek. Lilly's *Latin Grammar* and the *Sententiae Pueriles* are the books from which later in life he gathers his quotations for his plays. The very mistake made in one of these books he makes in his quotation. Some think that Shakspere left the Grammar School at about thirteen or fourteen, because his father had failed in business and needed the boy's help.

Stratford and Vicinity. — The most important part of any boy's education is that received outside of school. This is especially true in the case of this poet whose scholastic experiences were so meager. Stratford was then a small village with possibly 1,500 inhabitants. To the north of the river stretched the Forest of Arden, among whose trees the youthful wanderer must have passed many a happy hour. Picturesque is the word that comes to the mind in thinking of the neighborhood about Stratford. During these early, impressionable years the unconscious boy was gathering the material later to be transmuted into the imperishable gold of the poet's imagery. In *Venus and Adonis* we have a picture of Wat, the poor hare, pursued by the hunters — a picture such as any boy wandering over the hills of Warwickshire might observe.

> "By this, poor Wat, far off upon a hill,
> Stands on his hinder legs with listening ear,
> To hearken if his foes pursue him still;
> . . . . . .

Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch
Turn and return, indenting with the way;
Each envious brier his weary legs doth scratch,
Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay."

When Oberon observes,

"I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine,"

we may in fancy see the young Londoner summoning up the remembrance of his boyhood strolls over hill and dale. So, too, when he writes,

"Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy,"

we believe he is thinking of the Warwickshire days.

Near by were two famous castles, Warwick and Kenilworth. Some one has called Warwick Castle "that fairest monument of ancient and chivalrous splendor which yet remains uninjured by time." In Shakspere's day it was considered old. When in *Macbeth* we find

"This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.
This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
By his lov'd masonry that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here; no jutty, frieze,
Buttress, nor coign of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle,"

it is not too fanciful to suppose that Shakspere is thinking of Kenilworth Castle, "the most stupendous of similar structures that have fallen to decay." These places must have appealed to the romantic imagination of the Stratford boy.

Marriage and London. — When Shakspere was eighteen and a half years old he married Anne Hathaway, a woman eight years older, if, according to the inscription upon her tomb, she was sixty-seven years old when she died in 1623. Anne lived in Shottery, a small hamlet within easy reach of Stratford. The old cottage was purchased by the Birthplace Trustees in 1892, and is now one of the showplaces that attract thousands to Stratford and vicinity.

"How often in the summer-tide,
His graver business set aside,
Has stripling Will, the thoughtful-eyed,
As to the pipe of Pan,
Stepped blithesomely with lover's pride
Across the fields to Anne!" *

Just when Shakspere left Stratford and entered upon his London life is hard to determine with exactness, but we may say about 1586. There is a tradition that his departure was hastened by his deer-stealing from the estate of Sir Thomas Lucy. Much has been written concerning this youthful adventure. It is enough to say that poaching, although punished by law with imprisonment for three months and the payment of three times the amount of damage, was looked upon by the public with leniency. However, Sir Thomas Lucy and his fellow-owners of game-preserves, the men who also made the laws concerning poaching, looked upon the matter in a more serious light. Perhaps the unpleasantness connected with this incident did hasten Shakspere's departure from Stratford, but it is not necessary to fall back upon this tradition to account for his entrance into the larger and more stimulating life of London. He was now the head of a family consisting of a wife and three children; his father had met with reverses in business; there was little to do in Stratford; there was the ever-insistent call of the city.

London was then a city of about 150,000 inhabitants, small compared with the many-millioned metropolis of today, but rich in association and varied life even in the sixteenth century. It

* R. E. Burton, *Century*, 1889.

is estimated that ten thousand foreigners from all parts of the world thronged its streets. The Tower, the Cathedral, London Bridge, oftentimes decorated with the heads of those lately executed, its new tobacco shops where the art of smoking was taught, the two playhouses — The Theater, and The Curtain — all must have stirred the imagination of the young man who had come up from Stratford to try his fortune.

Just what he did at first is not known. There are traditions that he worked in a printing office, was a lawyer's clerk, that he held horses in front of the theater, and that he at once found work within the theater. The one thing of which we are sure is that he did soon secure this last employment. He was an actor, and then became a dramatist.

Shakspere as Actor. — His knowledge of stagecraft was acquired by actual experience on the stage. This was a most valuable experience, for a man may be a good poet and easily fail to be a dramatist. There are traditions that he played the Ghost in *Hamlet,* and Adam in *As You Like It.* On the title page of Ben Jonson's *Every Man in his Humor* occurs: "*Every One in His Umor.* This comedie was first acted in the yeere 1598 by the then L. Chamberleyne his servants. The principal comedians were Will. Shakspeare. . . ." Here his name occurs with a list of ten actors and his is placed first. In 1603, he occupies with Burbage the prominent place in the list of actors playing Jonson's *Sejanus.*

From acting he soon turned to the re-writing of old plays, and then to the making of new. That he must have made rapid progress is seen in the famous passage from the bitter pen of Robert Greene, who died in 1592. Greene had a hard struggle and became violently jealous of the young dramatist who was succeeding. He warns his contemporaries to guard against this upstart:

"Yes, trust them not; for there is an upstart crow beautified with our feathers that, with his Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide, supposes he is well able to bumbast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Johannes Factotum, is in his own conceit the onely Shakescene in a countrie . . . but it is pittie men of such rare wit should be subject to the pleasures of such rude grooms."

Business Interests. — Our poet was more than dramatist and actor: he was also a good business man. In addition to what he earned as actor and writer of plays, he owned shares in the Blackfriars and Globe theaters. What his income from his interests in these theaters was, is a matter of dispute. Professor Wallace thinks his share in Blackfriars, which originally cost him nothing but the yearly rental of nearly £6, was worth on the market about £100 and produced an income of between one-third and one-half that amount. A Mr. Witter, who owned the same amount of stock, one-fourteenth of the entire, of the Globe, places his income at from £30 to £40 a year.* This refers to the years before 1613. Money in those days had a far greater purchasing power than today. Some scholars multiply by 8 to get the present equivalent. This, with his income from the selling of his plays, sometimes placed at £25, and his salary as actor, estimated by some at £100, would give him a yearly income of about $6,000 in our money. Others have estimated it as high as $25,000 for the best years. However, as Professor C. W. Wallace, an American scholar, well characterizes the latter estimate, this is "a large fancy." It is enough to know that Shakspere was a better business man than his father; that he prospered in his London life; that as early as 1597 he was enabled to purchase New Place, a handsome house in the best part of Stratford. In 1602 he purchased 107 acres of land for £320; in 1605 the right to farm the Stratford tithes for £440, and in 1610 an estate of the Combe family. All this indicates the prosperity of a successful man.

The Bellot-Mountjoy Suit. — Professor Wallace has discovered twenty-six documents bearing on a case in which Shakspere is mentioned twenty-four times.† One of the documents is Shakspere's own deposition, signed by his hand. This signature is the sixth now in existence. To find these documents, the professor and his wife ransacked the records of the Public Record House, the great national archive of England, handling over a million documents in their search for anything having to do with

* *Century Magazine*, August, 1910.
† *Harper's Magazine*, March, 1910.

the name of Shakspere. In 1612 Stephen Bellot brought suit against Mountjoy, a fashionable French wig and head-dress maker, with whom Shakspere had probably been a lodger since 1598. Upon finishing his apprenticeship to Mountjoy, Bellot had married his master's daughter Mary. Upon the request of Madam Mountjoy, Shakspere had acted as an intermediary in arranging the marriage, as he admits in his signed deposition; he also says a dower was to go with the marriage, but forgets what the amount was, and denies that a legacy of £200 had been promised. Bellot was suing to recover the dowry; the case is referred for settlement to the French church in London.

The interest in this case lies in the possession of a new signature of Shakspere's, and in the light it throws upon Shakspere's residence and associates in London. Mountjoy's house was situated in a respectable neighborhood, on the corner of Muggle and Silver Streets. St. Paul's Cathedral, the center of the social life and gossip of the city, was within five minutes' walk. It is probable that Shakspere's greatest plays were written while he was a lodger in the house of the French Huguenot. In reading *Henry V* we can easily understand that Katharine and Alice and Henry, in their amusing attempts at learning a new language, are a reflection of what occurred frequently in the house of Mountjoy, when Mary and her father and mother were exchanging impromptu lessons with the gentle and quick-witted poet, who has repaid them by associating their names with his three hundred years after, insuring them an immortality.

The Elizabethan Age. — A great man is partly the product of his age. The Age of Pericles has a group of men such as Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Phidias, Miltiades, to mark it as one of the world's great epochs. So, too, at the time of the Italian Renaissance we have Leonardo, Raphael, Michelangelo, and a dozen other distinguished men, to add luster to that period. In both instances the men were nourished by the stirring age in which they lived. Shakspere cannot be explained, for genius is inexplicable, but we know that he was profoundly influenced by the age in which he lived.

The period during which Shakspere lived was an age of intellectual ferment in many parts of the world. In Italy we find Tasso, the epic poet; to the north of Tasso were Galileo and Kepler, the astronomers; in France, Montaigne was becoming the most famous of essayists, and Molière was soon to begin his career as the most gifted writer of comedy; in Spain, the world-renowned Cervantes was creating the immortal *Don Quixote*. We are told that it was during this same period that India, China, Japan, and Persia enjoyed a most productive intellectual activity.

"The England of Shakspere! The phrase suggests a train of associations that kindle the imagination. The age of literature, war, conquest, adventure, and achievement. The era of Edmund Spenser, 'called from faeryland to struggle 'gainst dark ways'; of Sir Philip Sidney, the scholar, the courtier, the gentleman; of Sir Walter Raleigh, author, knight, and explorer; of Bacon, 'the wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind.' It is the time when in the *Golden Hind* Drake is circumnavigating the globe; when Hawkins is exploring the Indies, and Frobisher is becoming the hero of the Northwest passage; the age of marvellous tales told by intrepid explorers and adventurers returning from America, a land whose fountains renewed youth, whose rivers flowed over sands of gold. It is the era of English sea-dogs pillaging Spanish provinces in spite of imperial manifestos — above all, it is the age of the Spanish Armada.

"To recall what this means it is necessary to remember that Spain was the great dominating empire of the sixteenth century. Philip II, the Duke of Alva, the horrors of the Spanish inquisition, condemn Spain's power in this period. But one midsummer morn all England awoke to the glorious news that the Invincible Armada was not invincible. England had triumphed, and now for the first time national life dreamed of the possibility of leadership in the great game of world-politics. The atmosphere was electric with new life. In rural England along lanes flanked with green hedges Englishmen walked with bosoms swelling with new pride, in bustling London vigorous burghers strode the city's streets with hearts pulsating with new warmth, and everywhere the eyes of all Englishmen flashed with new fire."*

That Shakspere was deeply interested in English history is attested by his ten English historical plays, ranging from *King John* to *Henry VIII*. His patriotism is not marked by the pro-

* Chubb's *Stories of Authors.*

luction of any particular poem, such as can be found in Burns or Scott, but by the spirit pervading these plays. Yet there is passage from the speech of the dying Gaunt in *Richard II* that ould have been written only by an intense patriot. These lines reathe the very fire of patriotism:

"This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself,
. . . .
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
. . . .
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
. . . .
This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,
Dear for her reputation through the world."

His Greatness.—One can appreciate the preeminence of hakspere only after an extensive acquaintance with both his ritings and those of the great literary masters of many times nd many lands. Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Homer, Vergil, Dante, Milton, Goethe, Schiller, and Molière are also great ames; but the opinion has been growing that Shakspere is the upreme genius of all. Until the student has read widely and ained that maturity of judgment which entitles him to an indeendent opinion, he is obliged to take the estimate of the critics. One might without indulging in subtle distinctions name a score f qualities which have combined to characterize the excellence f this poet, but it will suffice to name a few:

1. *His Insight into Life.*—It must always be remembered hat literature is a reflection of life; that to write well means ore than ability to string words like glittering beads upon a olden strand. Shakspere saw beneath the surface; he penerated into the heart of humanity. He was not deceived by the omp of courts and the glory of war. His kings and queens have humanity which in no respect differs from that of his vagaonds and paupers. He may make mistakes in history, he may ave his Roman characters act like London citizens, but he makes o mistakes in his interpretation of life. His characters are live

men and women in whom we are interested, not because of their costume or dialect, but because in them we see ourselves and our neighbors. Fashion changes, but the human heart retains its primitive loves and hates. Shakspere is the revealer and interpreter of these abiding and eternal emotions.

2. *His Morality.* — His plays breathe so wholesome a tone that a distinguished English clergyman, Canon Farrar, once said that next to the teachings of Holy Writ, England's greatest teacher has been the poetry of William Shakspere. On the other hand, Dr. Johnson wrote that Shakspere "seems to write without any moral purpose." Johnson evidently wanted more moralizing in the plays; he failed to see that the drama can be eminently moral without moralizing. Shakspere's dramas are moral because they illustrate the inexorable law that whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap. His philosophic grasp of reality is such that we see this world of ours not as an insubstantial fabric created and controlled by chance, but a world of order and law.

To be a creator is to be like God, godlike. It is the peculiar characteristic of all great creators that they are reverent seekers after truth. The irreverent are second-rate men. The Homers, the Davids, the Dantes, the Michelangelos, and the Shaksperes are worshippers and not mockers. To be a great moral teacher does not mean that the artist becomes a conscious preacher of morality. The true artist, like nature, teaches not by pedagogical precept, but by the revelation of beauty. Prosaic and obtrusive morality is an aesthetic fraud; it is tediousness that kills art. Our poet has seen that beauty and truth are one; in the alembic of his genius the elements are fused into unity. We arise from our reading of the great tragedies with the feeling that the poet is a high priest who has approached the burning bush with feet unshod.

3. *His Optimism.* — Though his tragedies are terrible in their gloom and despair, he does not become a pessimist. In the conflict between the Ormuzd and Ahriman, God and the Demon, the supremacy of evil is never permanent. Sorrow may endure for

the night, but joy cometh in the morning. He knows that right must prevail, that

> "God's in his heaven,
> All's right with the world."

When the curtain goes down in *Julius Caesar* it falls upon a Roman world restored to order. The assassination of Caesar is but an episode in a world of order. As the play ends we feel that under the new régime of Augustus an empire magnificent and world-wide in influence is to be established. In *Macbeth* we find another world in chaos, but when the curtain falls chaos has given place to cosmos, for Shakspere knew that treason and murder are not the forces that have wrought the foundations of the social structure. Crime is an episode. The main currents of life are peaceful. The storm is but a brief interruption in the day of sunshine.

"So profound was Shakspere's conviction of this great law, that, in the interest of philosophic truth, and regardless of artistic effect, he can never refrain from giving a hint of the world's recuperative powers. Instead of dropping his curtain upon a scene of hopeless gloom and discouragement, he makes it fall upon an orderly world. This instinct is based on a philosophic conception and is in harmony with the 'law within the law.'"

4. *His Concreteness.* — By this we mean that instead of writing about life, he gives us life in the forms of acting men and women. Shakspere never stops to say, "Now, this is what I really think of the matter." He has created scores of men and women who have an individuality of their own. There are over two hundred and fifty distinct characters in his dramas; and in making this count the strictly subordinate characters are omitted. Thackeray has but forty, and Dickens one hundred and two, while George Eliot has one hundred and seven.* Falstaff, Hamlet, Touchstone, Caliban, Puck, Prospero, Brutus, Horatio, Portia, Shylock, Cordelia, Polonius, Desdemona, Othello, Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, Rosalind, and Hotspur are names that stand for

* Prof. C. F. Johnson in *Elements of Literary Criticism.*

reality. They do not seem to be mere creations of the imagination. Hamlet, concerning whom as much has been written as about Napoleon, seems as real as the historic Corsican.

5. *Range and Variety.* — The greatest men are characterized by broad sympathies. Shakspere is preeminent in his ability to portray all phases of life without prejudice. He is as great in comedy as in tragedy. His sinners are drawn with as much care, with almost as much love, as his men and women of valor and purity. The unmoral Falstaff, the beastly Caliban receive the same careful and impartial treatment as is bestowed upon the sensitive Hamlet and the filial Cordelia. It is as though the dramatist said: "Here is life as I see it; here are the men and women as they walk to and fro on this little planet; saint and sinner, prince and pauper, hero and coward; I judge them not, I merely show them as they are."

His style is as varied as his thought. Although his early manner had the faults of his age, as he matured he became the master of all forms of expression. The fanciful conceits and involved expressions give place to a directness and simplicity that characterize a great soul. He could make language ring with the music of the forest bird and then again roar and thunder like the swelling tones of a cathedral organ. Listen to the crisp ring of his monosyllables in —

> "I cannot tell what you and other men
> Think of this life, but, for my single self,
> I had as lief not be as live to be
> In awe of such a thing as I myself."

And then contrast the sonorous polysyllabic strain in *Macbeth* —

> "Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
> Making the green one red."

6. *His Passion and Sanity.* — Some poets, like Shelley and Burns, have souls that are aflame with indignation at the wrongs of society; others, like Pope, are eminently sane and cool. They

look at life dispassionately, expressing the judgment of the intellect in polished verse. It is the glory of Shakspere that passion and sanity are delicately balanced; his sanity enabled him to see the "God of things as they are," and his passion penetrated into the deepest sorrows and rose to the highest aspirations of the human heart. This combination of power is rarer than the chastity and clearness of his diction, finer than the variety of his melodious verse, greater than the reach of his imagination.

The Poems and Sonnets.— The *Venus and Adonis* and the *Rape of Lucrece,* together with the *Sonnets,* comprise the non-dramatic writings of this poet. Of course, there are songs in the plays and a few disputed fragments, but those named are the ones worth considering. The *Venus and Adonis* was written, it is presumed from his dedication to the Earl of Southampton, where he calls it the "first heir of my invention," before any of his dramatic works. It was printed when the poet was twenty-nine, by Richard Field, and contains the author's name on the title page. The story is a classical tale of love, told by the poet at times in a manner objectionable to present-day taste. The poem shows the influence of Ovid; its charm consists in its power of description, its "beautiful imagery and metrical sweetness." A year later appeared the *Rape of Lucrece,* a poem more mature in dignity and thought. It is significant that of his early work these two publications brought the most approval from his contemporaries. It was fashionable for gentlemanly courtiers to write poems; the common playwright was an associate of actors and strolling companies. During the eight years that followed its appearance no fewer than seven editions of the *Venus and Adonis* were printed.

Of the sonnets there are 154. They first appeared in complete form in 1609, having been printed by Thomas Thorpe, without Shakspere's consent. We do not know whether the arrangement or sequence is Shakspere's or Thorpe's. The first sequence of 126 poems celebrates the affection of an elder for a younger man; the remaining sonnets seem to be addressed to or written about a woman of ill-omen, the "dark lady of the sonnets."

Like everything else connected with Shakspere, the sonnets have been the subject of endless controversy. To whom were they dedicated? Who is the young man of the first series? Who is the dark lady? When were they written? Are the sonnets a revelation of the inner life of the poet, or is he only amusing himself with a fashionable form of composition? These are some of the questions that have never been definitely answered.

Professor Raleigh, in writing of the attempts to unravel the mystery of the sonnets, has wittily said:

"There are many footprints around the cave of this mystery, none of them pointing in the outward direction. No one has ever attempted a solution of the problem without leaving a book behind him; and the shrine of Shakespeare is thickly hung with these votive offerings, all withered and dusty. No one has ever sought to gain access to this heaven of poetry by a privileged and secret stairway, without being blown ten thousand leagues awry, over the backside of the world, into the Paradise of Fools."

We must not forget that the sonnets themselves are the most valuable possession, not the mystery connected with them. They, as might be expected, are of uneven quality. The best are among the finest in the realm of literature. Where can be found nobler expression on friendship and love than in these two sonnets?

"When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight;
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
Which I new pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restor'd and sorrows end."

"Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,

Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved."

Classification of the Plays. — The plays are usually divided into Comedies, Tragedies, and Histories. This is not a strictly logical division, for a history may have the nature of a comedy or of a tragedy; *Richard III* is fiercely tragic, while in *Henry IV* the comic element predominates. Including only the principal plays, we have:

Comedies. — *Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, The Merry Wives of Windsor, As You Like It, Twelfth Night, The Winter's Tale,* and *The Tempest.*

Tragedies. — *Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth.*

Histories. — *Richard III, Henry V, Julius Caesar, 1* and *2 Henry IV.*

The student of literature should have a reading acquaintance with all these plays; everybody ought to be familiar with *The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It, Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth,* and *Julius Caesar.* The ten English historical plays, as a rule, are not so widely read, but no one who wishes to get a vivid impression of English history in the times of the wars between the Houses of York and Lancaster can afford to miss Shakspere's historical dramas. "Shakspere has probably done more," says Hudson, "to diffuse a knowledge of English history than all the historians together." Schlegel, the German critic, writes of them as "This mirror of kings should be the manual of princes."

The plays should be read in this order: *King John,*

Richard II, 1 Henry IV, 2 Henry IV, Henry V, 1, 2, and *3 Henry VI, Richard III,* and *Henry VIII.*

The Order of Composition.— When we study the poetry of Wordsworth or the fiction of George Eliot, we can trace the development of their minds by a study of the exact chronological order in which their writings appeared. With Shakspere we can do likewise, but not with the same assurance that we have our data correct. Shakspere never saw a complete edition of his plays, and when his friends, Heming and Condell, after the death of the dramatist, gathered into one volume thirty-six of the thirty-seven plays now attributed to him, they did not try to arrange the plays in the order in which they were written. However, by means of tests and facts and inferences, we have the approximate order, which at present is as follows:

Love's Labour's Lost	1590-1591
The Comedy of Errors	1590-1591
2 and 3 Henry VI	1590-1592
Richard III	1592-1593
Two Gentlemen of Verona	1592
King John	1592-1593
Richard II	1593-1594
Titus Andronicus	1593-1594
A Midsummer Night's Dream	1593-1595
Romeo and Juliet	1591, revised 1597
The Merchant of Venice	1594-1596
The Taming of the Shrew	1596-1597
1 Henry IV	1597
2 Henry IV	1598
Henry V	1599
Merry Wives of Windsor	1599
Much Ado About Nothing	1599
As You Like It	1599-1600
Julius Caesar	1599-1601
Twelfth Night	1601
Troilus and Cressida	1602
All's Well That Ends Well	1602
Hamlet (two versions)	1602, 1603-1604
Measure for Measure	1603
Othello	1604
King Lear	1604-1605

Macbeth	1605-1606
Antony and Cleopatra	1607-1608
Timon of Athens	1607-1608
Pericles	1608
Coriolanus	1609
Cymbeline	1610
The Winter's Tale	1610-1611
The Tempest	1611
King Henry VIII	1612-1613

External and Internal Evidence.—There are two kinds of evidence by which we determine the date of a play—external and internal. External evidence is any record or fact outside of the play itself; internal, such matter as can be found within the play. When Francis Meres, in his *Palladis Tamia,* published in 1598, names plays such as *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Merchant of Venice,* along with ten more attributed to Shakspere, we have external evidence that all the named plays were written before 1598. So, too, when we find a play entered on the Stationers' Register in a certain year, we have external evidence. Internal evidence is of various kinds and degrees. In *Henry V* we have a familiar illustration of one kind of internal evidence, when in the prologue of the Fifth Act we read,

> "Were now the general of our gracious empress,
> As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,"

we conclude that this must have been written in 1599, for Lord Essex went to Ireland in April and returned to England in September of that year. This date, of course, is not positively proved by this reference, but it is very likely the correct one. Familiar internal tests are the rhyme and the "end-stopped" tests. First, as to the rhyme test, we note that some plays have many rhyming lines, while others have very few. When an early play—one known to be written before 1598—is compared with one written at a later time, we find that plays like *Richard II,* the *Comedy of Errors,* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* have many more rhyming lines than plays like *Macbeth* and *Hamlet.* If one were to discover a new play by Shakspere, and

found many rhyming lines, the presumption would be that it was one of the early plays. The "end-stopped" lines are those which come to a complete or partial pause at the end of the line. The lines about England which we have already quoted illustrate this early practice. When the poet had acquired greater mastery over the verse form, he varied his style by frequently carrying the meaning so that the pause occurs within the line instead of at the end. Examples can readily be found in *Hamlet, Macbeth, The Tempest,* and the other later plays.

The best internal test is the thought test. By this is meant the maturity and vigor of thought found in the play. As the poet grew in years he grew in power. Even genius grows, and Shakspere is no exception. If we find a play in which the poet seems to play with an idea, to turn the thought into a variety of expressions, to indulge in the exuberant expression of fancy merely as a rhetorical feat, we may be sure that this is one of the early plays. As he advances in technique, in power to make his plot and characters conform to the demands of the stage, he also advances in his comprehensive insight into the heart of man and nature. He wastes no time in verbal conceits and rhetorical play. He condenses the twenty-eight lines on sleep in *2 Henry IV* to the six lines in *Macbeth,* and gains by the condensation. It would be contrary to all the laws of psychology and the experience of man to assume that Shakspere began his dramatic career with *The Tempest,* and *King Lear,* and *Hamlet,* and ended with *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Richard III.*

The Four Periods.— The dramatist's writings have been divided into four groups, or periods. This is an arbitrary but helpful division in the study of the development of his art and thought.

The First Period.— We might call this the Period of Experimentation, for during this time Shakspere is trying his hand upon histories and comedies. He takes old plays and re-writes them, and invents comedies in which the fantastic and farcical element plays a large part. The period extends from the time he came to London to 1594 inclusive. The best plays of this

period are *Richard III, A Midsummer Night's Dream,* and *Romeo and Juliet. Richard III* shows the influence of Marlowe, who was prone to portray life in excess. The inferior delineation of feminine character, the rhyming lines, the bombastic villainy of the hero, are marks of the youthful Shakspere. The subtle villainy of the complex Iago shows how far the dramatist had advanced in his interpretation of wickedness when thirteen or fourteen years later he wrote *Othello. A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a wonderful creation, and is worthy of the dramatist at any stage of his development. *Romeo and Juliet* is a passionate lyrical drama, the drama of adolescence. It could have been written only by a youth. These two plays may mark the transition from the first period of experimentation into the second period of fulfilment.

The Second Period.— The Period of Fulfilment may be given as a name for the second stage in the growth of Shakspere's art. It extends from 1595 to 1600. The plays that eminently characterize this period are the two parts of *Henry IV, Henry V, The Merchant of Venice,* and *As You Like* It. In the *King Henry* plays we have the jolly Falstaff, as great in his way as Hamlet is in his. The one in comedy, the other in tragedy, Falstaff and Hamlet are the supreme achievement of the dramatist in the creation of character. *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It* mark a great advance from the early *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona.* Shylock and Portia, Rosalind and Touchstone are among the immortals. Nor has he grown only in the ability to portray varied human character; his ability to weave the various threads of his story into the single strand of plot unity is also apparent, although he has not yet attained the mastery he displays in *Othello.*

The Third Period.— The Period of Stress and Gloom would not be an inappropriate title for the time during which his great tragedies appeared. However, it is dangerous to infer that because *Hamlet, Othello, King Lear,* and *Macbeth* appeared during this third period, from 1599 or 1600 to 1608, that Shakspere himself was undergoing terrible mental strain and was

steeped in melancholy. It is commonly said that the sending to the block of Essex, the imprisonment in the Tower of London of Southampton, the death of his father in 1601, and loss of other friends, causing the poet to see the sadder side of life, led him to tragedy. This may be true, but one may ask why when his only son, Hamnet, the boy upon whom Shakspere must have looked as the only hope of perpetuating the family name and estate, died in 1596, Shakspere could write *The Taming of the Shrew,* create Falstaff, write *Much Ado,* and frolic with Touchstone in the Forest of Arden. It may be that in this third period Shakspere is writing tragedy because the public taste had tired of comedy. At any rate, we have the tragedies, the most colossal achievement of English literature, perhaps of all literatures. *Hamlet* is discursive and loose in plot, but rich in variety and philosophic insight — to many it is the greatest of all plays; *Othello* is considered his masterpiece in plot structure; *King Lear* has an elemental largeness that makes it the most severe test of an actor's power; *Macbeth* is terrific with concentrated energy.

The Fourth Period. — This is the last period, and includes the plays written after 1608–1609. *The Tempest, Cymbeline,* and *The Winter's Tale* are the plays that mark this period as the Period of Reconciliation. The story no longer moves onward to an inevitable catastrophe; the gentle spirit of forgiveness averts the tragic end. There is lacking the rollicking fun of the earlier comedies; in its stead we have the refined tenderness of a more mature dramatist. *Pericles* and *Henry VIII* also belong to this period, but they are partly the work of hands other than Shakspere's.

The Tempest is the most popular of the plays of this period. Its poetic imagery, philosophic insight, inventiveness, and subtle delineation of character show that the mature poet had lost none of his power. He was never more original than in his creation of the characters of Ariel, Caliban, Prospero, and Miranda. Some read in the following lines of the play Shakspere's personal abdication of the throne of dramatic writing:

"But this rough magic
I here abjure, and, when I have requir'd
Some heavenly music, which even now I do,
. . . . I'll break my staff,
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,
And deeper than did ever plummet sound,
I'll drown my book."

The Bacon Controversy.—In 1856 Miss Delia Bacon wrote an article for *Putnam's Monthly*, in which she tried to prove that the plays were written by Francis Bacon. The idea was not altogether new, but she gave the skepticism greater publicity. Since then the field of controversy has been entered by doubters and enthusiasts of all grades of intelligence and scholarship, neither side having exclusive possession of the unfair and hot-headed.

The doubters no longer believe that Bacon was the author of the plays, for they have been driven from their original contention to the more general statement that it was a person other than Shakspere. This is a more wary position to occupy, but it is unsatisfying. As Judge Webb, professor of law in the University of Dublin, one of the advocates of this theory, confessed, "But the only thing that will satisfy the world that he was not the author of the plays is a demonstration that another was." When Spedding, the eminent biographer of Bacon, was asked by Judge Holmes, who had written a book trying to prove the claims of the Baconians, as to his opinion, he replied:

"I have read your book on the authorship of Shakespeare to the end, and . . . I must declare myself not only unconvinced but undisturbed. To ask me to believe that Bacon was the author of these dramas is like asking me to believe that Lord Brougham was the author of not only Dickens' novels, but of Thackeray's also, and of Tennyson's poems besides. I deny that a *prima facie* case is made out of questioning Shakespeare's title. But if there were any reason for supposing that somebody else was the real author, I think I am in a condition to say that whoever it was, it was not Bacon."

One of the commonest arguments is that based on the supposed erudition displayed in the plays. It is said the plays display much learning; Shakspere was not a learned man, there-

fore the plays could not have been written by Shakspere. But modern scholars do not say that the plays contain evidences of scholarship. Judge Allen, of the Supreme Bench of Massachusetts, has shown that Shakspere's knowledge of law was inaccurate. Any reader of Shakspere's sources, such as Holinshed, can readily understand where Shakspere got his knowledge of history. His plays are not learned in the sense in which *Paradise Lost* and the plays of Jonson are learned. In his Roman plays his characters are men and women with English customs. He makes many mistakes in allusion, in history, in geography, in classical reference. Had he been a scholar like Bacon or Jonson, he would

"not have introduced clocks into the Rome of Julius Caesar, nor would he have made Hector quote Aristotle, nor Hamlet study at the University of Wittenberg, founded five hundred years after Hamlet's time; nor would he have put pistols into the age of Henry IV, nor cannon into the age of King John."

On this point Dr. Hiram Corson strikingly writes in his *An Introduction to Shakespeare:*

"Learning indeed! If Shakespeare hadn't possessed something infinitely better than learning (and, I would add, something infinitely better than a great analytic, inductive, deductive, and classifying intellect, such as that possessed by Lord Bacon), we should not now be enjoying such a noble dramatic heritage as we are. The plays bear more emphatic testimony than do any other masterpieces of genius, to the fact that great creative power may be triumphantly exercised without learning (I mean the learning of the Schools). But the knowledge and the wisdom with which they are gloriously illuminated, are the greatest possible which man has yet, in his whole history, shown himself capable of possessing—just that kind of knowledge and wisdom which Shakespeare, assuming the requisite constitutional receptivity, was most favorably circumstanced to acquire."

Shakspere is one of the wisest and profoundest of men, but he is not learned.

The literature on this subject is already large; some of it is a striking illustration of misused ability and wasted energy.

George Brandes characterizes the advocates of the theory in forceful criticism:

"It is well known that in recent years a troop of less than half-educated people have put forth the doctrine that Shakespere lent his name to a body of poetry with which he had really nothing to do."

And the authors of *An Introduction to Shakespeare* say,

"their writings, taken as a whole, form one of the strangest medleys of garbled facts and fallacious reasonings which has ever imposed on an honest and intelligent but uninformed public."

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CHAPTER IV

Milton

MILTON is one of the grand, massive figures of English literature.

> "Thy soul was like a star and dwelt apart;
> Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea."

So thinks Wordsworth in his incomparable sonnet on Milton. There are scores of English poets who have written more gracefully, who have described nature more accurately, whose humanity has touched our hearts more intimately; but where is the poet the music of whose verse rolls forth in grander harmonies, carrying on its melody the rich argosies of Hebrew and classic tradition, whose thought maintains a higher elevation, whose imagination has successfully dared to give "a local habitation and a name" to the vasty spirits of Heaven and Hell? For more than two hundred years, while the reading public has run the gamut of taste from Pope to Kipling, innumerable critics, both English and foreign, have been pointing out the defects of Milton, his old-fashioned theology and Puritanic narrowness, his lack of humor, his Latinized sentence-structure, and many noble poets have added luster to the pages of English literature; but today, if the English-speaking nations were to be represented at an international congress of poets, we would, with Mr. Pattison, choose Shakspere and Milton; Shakspere first, but then Milton.

Birth and Parentage. — John Milton, like Spenser and Chaucer before him, and Pope, Gray, and Keats after him, was born in London. The date was December 9, 1608; the place, Bread Street, Cheapside, in the rooms of the household living over the shop carrying the sign, "The Spread Eagle." He was baptized on December 20, in All Hallows Church, and his name can still be read in its register, which was saved when the building was

destroyed in the Great Fire. Bread Street is famous for its Mermaid Tavern, where Shakspere and his coterie met to jest and drink canary; in the language of Keats,

> "Souls of poets dead and gone,
> What Elysium have ye known,
> Happy field or mossy cavern,
> Choicer than the Mermaid Tavern."

As Milton was eight years old when Shakspere died, "the shadow of Shakspere may have fallen on Milton's eager face and the Master of English Drama touched the Master of English Epic."

John Milton, the poet's father, was a scrivener, a profession or trade concerning itself with the drawing up of deeds and wills. "Neither for haste nor covetousness I shall take upon me to make any deed whereof I have not cunning without good advice and information of counsel." Diligent and frugal he must have been, for he was able to send both his sons to Cambridge, and to retire from active business to Horton in 1632. The father had much ability in music, taking rank as a composer with the best of his day. It is not hard to believe that the musical ability of the father had some influence in the making of the mighty harmonies of Milton's verse. Of the mother, Sarah Jeffrey, we know but little.

Early Education.— Much of his early education was by the instruction of private tutors, but for four years he attended St. Paul's School. At the age of sixteen he was ready for college. In his own language he tells us that even before this he had, "by the ceaseless diligence and care of my father (whom God recompense) been exercised to the tongues and some sciences as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers both at home and at the schools." Aubrey, the antiquarian, who knew Milton and wrote a memoir of him, tells us that when Milton was very young, "he studied very hard and sate up very late, commonly till twelve or one at night; and his father ordered the maid to sit up for him." This information agrees with Milton's own words concerning his studies in the *Defensio Secunda,* where occurs this passage of great autobiographical interest:

"I was born at London of an honest family; my father was distinguished by the undeviating integrity of his life; my mother, by the esteem in which she was held, and the alms which she bestowed. My father destined me from a child to the pursuits of literature; and my appetite for knowledge was so voracious, that, from twelve years of age, I hardly ever left my studies, or went to bed before midnight. This primarily led to my loss of sight. My eyes were naturally weak, and I was subject to frequent headaches; which, however, could not chill the ardor of my curiosity, or retard the progress of my improvement. My father had me daily instructed in the grammar-school, and by other masters at home. He then, after I had acquired a proficiency in various languages, and had made a considerable progress in philosophy, sent me to the University of Cambridge. Here I passed seven years in the usual course of instruction and study, with the approbation of the good, and without any stain upon my character, till I took the degree of Master of Arts. After this I did not, as this miscreant feigns, run into Italy, but of my own accord retired to my father's house, whither I was accompanied by the regret of most of the fellows of the college, who showed me no common marks of friendship and esteem. On my father's estate, where he had determined to pass the remainder of his days, I enjoyed an interval of uninterrupted leisure, which I entirely devoted to the perusal of the Greek and Latin classics; though I occasionally visited the metropolis, either for the sake of purchasing books, or of learning something new in mathematics or in music, in which I, at that time, found a source of pleasure and amusement. In this manner I spent five years till my mother's death. I then became anxious to visit foreign parts, and particularly Italy. My father gave me his permission, and I left home with one servant."

At Cambridge.—He was enrolled as a lesser pensioner of Christ's College, Cambridge, on February 12, 1625, "the greatest poetic name in an University roll already including Spenser, and destined to include Dryden, Gray, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Tennyson." As the boy's tutors were Oxford men, it would seem that that university instead of Cambridge would have been the choice of the Milton family. Mr. Garnett describes the Cambridge of Milton's time as "an institution undergoing modification, rather by the decay of the old than by the intrusion of the new." Milton, like Carlyle and Ruskin of a later century, does not profess to be greatly indebted to his university experience. Possibly such men are apt to underestimate the value of formal instruction. Their minds are too eager and independent to be

satisfied with the jejune diet doled out by pedantic teachers. Before Milton's first year was ended he had a quarrel with his tutor, William Chappell, which resulted in his temporary withdrawal from Cambridge. Upon his return a different tutor was assigned to him, and henceforth his university life was uninterruptedly smooth. In 1629 he graduated as Bachelor of Arts, and in July, 1632, he obtained the degree of Master of Arts.

By the time Milton was ready to leave Cambridge he had won the esteem of his teachers and associates. We are told by Wood that

"'twas usual with him to sit up till midnight at his book, which was the first thing that brought his eyes into the danger of blindness. By his indefatigable study he profited exceedingly, performed the academical exercises to the admiration of all, and was esteemed a virtuous and sober person, yet not to be ignorant of his own parts."

He is described as of middle height, of fair complexion, with a musical voice, dark gray eyes, and auburn hair falling on his shoulders. Although his personal charm and purity of life led him to be nicknamed "the lady of Christ's," he must not be accounted effeminate. His manner was manly and he considered himself a match for any one with the sword. Aubrey quaintly tells us that he "lodged a harmonical and ingenious soul in a beautiful and well-proportioned body."

Earliest Poems.—We are told by Aubrey that Milton was a poet when he was eleven years old, and Milton himself tells us that it was under the guidance of one of his first tutors, Thomas Young, that "I penetrated into the recesses of the muses, saw the sacred and green places of Parnassus, and drank the Pierian cups"—a grandiloquent way of saying that Young led him to write verses. The first poems we possess are metrical paraphrases of Psalms 119 and 136, composed in 1624. Of these efforts Dr. Johnson has correctly said, "They raise no great expectations; they would in any numerous school have obtained praise, but not excited wonder." In 1626, while he was visiting London because of his quarrel with his Cambridge tutor, he wrote *On the Death of a Fair Infant.* About this time he also

composed several Latin elegies, and during his college days he wrote seven Latin essays or orations called *Prolusiones Oratoriae*. Better known than any of these are his odes on *Christ's Nativity* (1629) and *Upon the Circumcision* (1630), the former of which is the best of these early productions. It is, however, a strange mingling of Christianity, classicism, and the Middle Ages." In 1630 among the pieces he wrote are also *The Passion* and an epitaph on Shakspere in which he admiringly calls the Bard of Avon,

"Dear son of memory, great heir of fame."

During his last year at Cambridge he wrote the following sonnet, interesting as indicating the high seriousness with which he already looked at life:

"How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stol'n on his wing my three-and-twenti'th year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.

Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arriv'd so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits indu'th.

Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure ev'n
To that same lot, however mean, or high,

Towards which Time leads me, and the will of Heaven;
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-Master's eye."

At Horton.—After leaving Cambridge he went to Horton where he resided with his father for five years and nine months, from July, 1632, to April, 1638. Horton, near the towers of Windsor castle and the forest, was a quiet country place about seventeen miles from London, then a city of about 300,000. Professor Masson describes it as "a rich, teeming, verdurous flat, charming by its appearance of plenty, and by the goodly show of wood along the fields and pastures."

To a mind as serious as Milton's the choice of his life work

must have presented itself with frequency long before he left the university. Refusing the call of the church because of what he considered its tyranny, and having no taste for the law, he finally decided in favor of the literary life.

From this point forward Milton's life may be divided into three parts: in the first we find him at Horton, leading the quiet life of the scholar, and producing his matchless short poems, *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, Comus,* and *Lycidas;* in the next we find him in the midst of the political strife of his day, abandoning poetry for the writing of bitter controversial prose; in the last, blind and solitary, he achieves immortality by writing *Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained,* and *Samson Agonistes.*

L'Allegro and Il Penseroso.— Had Milton written nothing but these two companion poems, he would still have a permanent place in our literature, for they are among the finest in our language. Henry van Dyke has said:

"I do not think that *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso,* and *Comus* have any lower place in the world, or less enduring life, than *Paradise Lost.* We have thought so much of Milton's strength and sublimity that we have ceased to recognize what is also true, that he, of all English poets, is by nature the supreme lover of beauty."

The titles of the first two, in questionable Italian, may be translated as "the cheerful man" and "the contemplative man"; the poems respectively describe the delights of Mirth and the pleasures of Melancholy.

L'Allegro opens with an imprecation against Melancholy, "of Cerberus and blackest Midnight born," and an invitation to Mirth. The body of the poem contains descriptions of the phases of Nature, beginning with the morning and ending with the night. *Il Penseroso* begins with an invective against "vain deluding joys" and an invitation to "divinest Melancholy." The time extends from night to the morning. Each of the poems has been minutely analysed by those painstaking critics who are not content with the clear expression of the beautiful, but seek for recondite meanings and obscure symbolism. What chiefly interests us is that Milton has produced beautiful poetry

on very simple themes — the delights of Mirth and the pleasures of Melancholy.

Both poems are characterized by an exquisite workmanship manifesting itself in a perfect diction; the sentiment is "married to immortal verse." In *L'Allegro* we have the quick movement of

> "Haste thee nymph, and bring with thee
> Jest and youthful jollity;
> . . . .
> Come, and trip it as ye go
> On the light, fantastic toe."

On the other hand, in *Il Penseroso* the movement is slow and solemn, with suitable adaptation to the thought —

> "Come pensive Nun, devout and pure,
> Sober, stedfast, and demure."

The poems have many allusions, such as one would expect from a classical scholar like Milton. We soon meet with Cerberus, Cimmerian, and Euphrosyne in *L'Allegro,* and with Morpheus, Memnon's sister, and Vesta in *Il Penseroso.* These, however, are not so numerous as to hinder our appreciation of the picturesque descriptions of Nature as seen by our poet who, without moralizing like Gray or without the mysticism of Wordsworth, describes things as they seemed to a lover of the beautiful. Of Poe it has been remarked that, with the exception of *The Raven,* he presents few lines that lend themselves to the art of the illustrator; of these two poems of Milton it may be observed that few lines do not lend themselves to the pencil of the artist.

"The two idylls [writes Mark Pattison] breathe the free air of spring and summer, and of the fields around Horton. They are thoroughly naturalistic; the choicest expression our language has yet found of the fresh charm of country life, not as that life is lived by the peasant, but as it is felt by a young and lettered student, issuing at early dawn, or at sunset, into the fields from his chamber and his books. All rural sights and sounds and smells are here blended in that ineffable combination, which once or twice in our lives has saluted our young senses before their perceptions were blunted by alcohol, by lust, or ambition, or diluted by the social distractions of great cities."

With which of the two moods did Milton most sympathize, the mood of *L'Allegro* or the mood of *Il Penseroso?* While if any distinction of excellence is to be made, to my taste at least, it would be in favor of *L'Allegro,* yet one cannot escape the feeling that the pleasures of Melancholy had more charm for our sober-minded scholar who looked upon his poetic gift as something holy and consecrated to the high service of the Almighty. While Milton's delights of Mirth are almost Puritanic in their limitations, and a poet might indulge his fancy in

> "Untwisting all the chains that tie
> The hidden soul of harmony,"

without injury to his nature, we feel that our poet's deepest longing is expressed in the beautiful prayer at the end of *Il Penseroso*—

> "But let my due feet never fail
> To walk the studious cloister's pale,
> And love the high embowed roof,
> With antique pillars massy proof,
> And storied windows richly dight,
> Casting a dim religious light.
> There let the pealing organ blow
> To the full voic'd quire below,
> In service high, and anthems clear,
> As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
> Dissolve me into ecstacies,
> And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes.
> . . . . .
> Till old experience do attain
> To something like prophetic strain."

Comus.—To this period belong *Arcades*, a brief mask in honor of the seventy years of the Countess-Dowager of Derby, and the more widely known *Comus.* The original description on the title page of *Comus* read, "A Masque Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634, before the Earl of Bridgewater, Lord President of Wales." A masque, or mask, has been defined as "a form of entertainment, in part dramatic, but having as its main feature dancing, with music, poetry, elaborate costuming, and spectacular

effects, as highly important accessories." It was usually performed in honor of some distinguished guest. Milton's, as the title shows, was given in honor of the Lord President of Wales. His youngest daughter, Lady Alice Egerton, and her two younger brothers acted the parts of the Lady and the Two Brothers in *Comus*.

Scholars have sought for the sources of Milton's *Comus* and have found that he may have gathered hints and suggestions from Puteanus, Peele, Fletcher, Browne, and Jonson, but that the mask is essentially original. There are masks by Jonson that rank higher in sprightliness and artistic unity, but no mask ranks higher in the loftiness of its poetry. "The richest fruit of Milton's early genius," is Garnett's comment on *Comus*, but it should be added that he thinks Milton's pedantry, his lack of humor, and his moralizing tendency, faults that later appear in *Paradise Lost*, are anticipated in *Comus*. That he should moralize might be expected when the ethical purpose of the mask is to show forth the power of Chastity over Vice, the helplessness of Lust to taint "the sun-clad power of Chastity." The subject was a favorite one with Milton, whose own life was in accord with his principles.

> "So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity,
> That when a soul is found sincerely so,
> A thousand liveried angels lackey her,
> Driving far off each thing of sin and guilt,
> And in clear dream and solemn vision
> Tell her of things that no gross ear can hear;
> Till oft converse with heavenly habitants
> Begin to cast a beam on the outward shape,
> The unpolluted temple of the mind,
> And turns it by degrees to the soul's essence,
> Till all be made immortal."

Lycidas.—"The high-water mark of English poesy and of Milton's own production," is Mr. Pattison's estimate of *Lycidas*. He also thinks we must wait for a century and a half before we find an equal to *Lycidas* in Wordsworth's *Ode on Immortality*.

This poem was finished in November, 1637 It was during

the years between the composition of *Comus* and *Lycidas* tha Oxford gave Milton the Master of Arts degree. His mothe died in April, 1637, and Ben Jonson in August of that same yea During this period, while still living at Horton, he writes to hi friend Diodati:

"What God has resolved concerning me I know not, but this I know at least — He has instilled into me a vehement love of the beautiful. . . You ask what I am thinking of? So may the good Deity help me, o immortality — I am pluming my wings and meditating flight."

When he wrote that he was meditating an epic poem, bu that was long delayed. The immediate result of his love of the beautiful is the matchless tribute to the memory of his friend Edward King, who was drowned when the ship on which he was sailing from Chester to Dublin struck a rock. Because of its artificial setting, Milton's grief and admiration masquerading under the form of one shepherd mourning for another, the poem has been criticised as lacking warmth, but it must be remembered that his choice of the pastoral form imposed fixed limitations on his art. The poem is to be judged as a pastoral. "It is needless to analyze it, and all criticism is weaker than the poem itself," writes Stopford Brooke,

"Yet we may say that one of its strange charms is its solemn undertone rising like a religious chaunt through the elegiac music; the sense of a stern national crisis in the midst of its pastoral mourning; the sense of Milton's grave force of character among the flowers and fancies of the poems; the sense of the Christian religion pervading the classical imagery. We might say that these things are ill-fitted to each other. So they would be, were not the art so fine and the poetry so over-mastering; were they not fused together by genius into a whole so that the unfitness itself becomes fascination."

Trip Abroad. — Italy, the land of art and romance and literature, has always made a strong appeal to literary Englishmen. Some, like Byron and Shelley, Landor and Browning, have made their homes there and produced a literature greatly modified by their Italian experience. Milton did not remain there long enough to modify the somber cast of his Puritanism. He was gone from England from the spring of 1638 to about August 1,

1639. During his trip abroad he met in Paris, Grotius, "the first of living Dutchmen," then suffering banishment from his own country and serving Sweden in the capacity of ambassador. He visited Pisa, Florence, Naples, Rome, Venice, and other Italian cities. In Florence he met Galileo, the blind astronomer. The visitor to Florence today will find a tablet on a house with an inscription stating that here Milton visited Galileo. "The meeting between the two great blind men of their century," writes Mr. Garnett, "is one of the most picturesque in history; it would have been more pathetic still if Galileo could have known that his name would be written in *Paradise Lost,* or Milton could have foreseen that within thirteen years he too would see only with the inner eye, but that the calamity which disabled the astronomer would restore inspiration to the poet."

While Milton was abroad he heard rumors of political strife at home. He felt that it was his duty to return home. "The sad news of civil war coming from England called me back, for I thought it disgraceful, while my fellow-countrymen were fighting for liberty, that I should be travelling abroad for pleasure." Some of his critics charge that this high profession was not followed by works, for it is said, when he does return after four months more of lingering, he does nothing but keep a private school. However, the fact that he went home, ready to do what he could when the opportunity offered, is what stands to his credit.

When he was in Geneva he was asked by the Cerdogni family to write in their album. He wrote:

"If Virtue feeble were
Heaven itself would stoop to her.
Caelum, non animum, muto, dum trans mare curro.
Junii 10, 1639, Joannes Miltonus, Anglus."

And when he was back again in England he testifies:

"I again take God to witness that in all those places where so many things are considered lawful, I lived sound and untouched from all profligacy and vice, having this thought perpetually before me, that though I might escape the eyes of men, I certainly could not the eyes of God."

The Prose Writings

The Second Period. — To understand the next twenty years of Milton's life, from 1640 to 1660, one needs to know the history of England during those turbulent years in which a king was beheaded and a Lord Protector became the dictator of the nation. Without attempting a full explanation, a few general remarks must here be made. Putting the matter in its simplest form, the struggle was the old, world-wide conflict between the privileged few and the people, between royalty and democracy, between tyranny and liberty. As the interests of an Established Church were bound up with those of the aristocracy, this social and political struggle became also a religious conflict in which the Presbyterians and Independents arrayed themselves against the English Church.

It is not hard to understand where Milton's sympathies would be in a conflict of this sort, and yet he must not be classed with those zealots who frowned upon art and literature. I believe Macaulay says somewhere that the Puritan objected to bear-baiting, not because it was cruel to the bear but because it gave pleasure to the spectators. By university training, by travel, and by temperament, Milton was an ardent lover of beauty. Music and art and literature are usually fostered by the aristocracy, and in England the aristocracy were the supporters of a monarchy that represented tyranny in government and privilege in religion. The same impulse that made him an ardent seeker after the beautiful led him to become the champion of that beauty which resides in purity of conduct and liberty of action. The church with its selfish prelates and "childish passion for mummeries," the Royalists with their tyranny and absurd doctrine of the divine right of kings, could not hold the allegiance of so lofty a soul as Milton's. Nor yet was he a bigoted Puritan. While Macaulay's estimate may have a grain of exaggeration, it is essentially true:

"In his character the noblest qualities of every party were combined in harmonious union. From the Parliament and from the Court, from the conventicle and the Gothic cloister, from the gloomy and sepulchral

circles of the Roundheads, and from the Christmas revel of the hospitable Cavalier, his nature selected and drew to itself whatever was great and good, while it rejected all the base and pernicious ingredients by which those finer elements were defiled."

First Prose. — In the days before the advent of the magazine and the newspaper, the pamphlet was the medium for the expression and distribution of ideas. Milton's first pamphlet discussed ecclesiastical reform; it appeared in 1641 under the cumbersome title *Of Reformation touching Church Discipline in England and the Causes that hitherto have hindered it.* In his opinion the causes that have hindered progress are the Antiquarians, who defend prelacy because it is old, the Libertines, who defend it because it is indulgent, and the Politicians, who defend it because prelacy and monarchy are one in interests. Four more pamphlets were called forth by the fierce controversy that then raged. Of these the fifth and last, 1642, had a special interest because of the references to Milton himself. Bishop Hall had attacked Milton's private life: "Where his morning haunts are, I wist not, but he who would find him after dinner must search the playhouses and the bordelli, for there I have traced him." This base slander was vigorously refuted by the poet, whose consciousness of the purity of his life gives a beauty and dignity to the impassioned prose replying to the *Animadversions* of the slandering prelate.

Marriage. — His next prose writings are the outgrowth of his matrimonial experience. Writes Mr. Pattison:

"Hitherto, up to his thirty-fifth year, independent master of leisure and the delights of literature, his years had passed without a check or a shadow. From this day forward domestic misery, the importunities of business, the clamor of controversy, crowned by the crushing calamity of blindness, were to be his portion for more than thirty years. Singular among poets in the serene fortune of the first half of life, in the second half his piteous fate was to rank in wretchedness with that of his masters, Dante or Tasso."

In May, 1643, Milton made a visit to the home of Richard Powell, a Cavalier of Oxfordshire. In a month's time our poet

returned to his home, bringing with him a bride, Mary Powell, a young girl of seventeen. As for sixteen years the Powell family had been paying interest to John Milton Sr. on a debt of £500, it seems highly probable that the poet had known Mary Powell before this visit. But the immediate sequel to the marriage shows that he did not know her very well, for a few weeks after the marriage we find him busily engaged in writing a hasty but vehement tract on the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. What brought about a state of mind that should lead a man to be advocating divorce a few weeks after his marriage, we shall never know. What we do know is that the young bride left her husband at the end of a month, returning to her father's house with the understanding that she would return on Michaelmas; that when that time came she did not return, and the messenger sent by Milton for her was "dismissed with some sort of contempt."

It is easy to surmise that the young girl found the Puritanic household a dreary place, and, uneducated and possibly frivolous, she may have found the scholarly poet "too good for human nature's daily food." She ran away, and wives ought not to run away from husbands, and yet in view of those seventeen years one is inclined to believe that Milton himself must share the blame. His attitude toward woman, as expressed both in prose and poetry, is somewhat contradictory. He believed her inferior to man, "He for God only, she for God in him." We are told that her resemblance to God's image is less than that of man's, and yet in *Paradise Lost* we come upon some of the most beautiful appreciations of woman. For example:

> "When I approach
> Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
> And in herself complete, so well to know
> Her own, that what she wills to do or say,
> Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;
> All higher knowledge in her presence falls
> Degraded; Wisdom in discourse with her
> Loses discount'nanc't, and like Folly shows;
> Authority and Reason on her wait,

As one intended first, not after made
Occasionally; and to consummate all,
Greatness of mind and Nobleness their seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her, as a guard angelic plac't."

It is pleasant to add that after the downfall of the cause of he Royalists, possibly because the Powell family felt the advisibility of keeping on good terms with a man who had some nfluence with the conquering side, a reconciliation was effected etween Mary and Milton. It occurred while Milton was visiting at a house in St. Martin's le Grand, through the good offices f friends of both families. The young wife, who was now ineteen, suddenly introduced into his presence, fell upon her nees and begged his forgiveness. This was granted by Milton, who no doubt felt that he himself was not without fault. When wenty-six years old Mary Milton died, having been married nine ears. Of her four children, three, all daughters, lived to naturity.

While upon this subject we may add that in November, 1656, e married his second wife, Catharine Woodcock, who died in February, 1658. The XVIII sonnet is her undying monument. He dreams she has returned to him:

"Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shin'd
So clear, as in no face with more delight.
But O as to embrace me she inclin'd,
I wak'd, she fled, and day brought back my night."

His third wife was Elizabeth Minshull. He married her in February, 1664. She survived him.

On Education and the Areopagitica.—No prose of Milton's s more widely known than the *Tractate on Education* and the *Areopagitica*. His essay on Education was written in the form f a letter to Samuel Hartlib. Hartlib, the son of a Polish merhant who had married an English woman, and Milton had talked ogether on the topic of education, and Hartlib had finally asked he learned schoolmaster, for Milton was then tutoring, to write own his ideas so that they might be preserved. As to the value

of his ideas there is a difference of opinion. R. H. Quick thinks he is less useful than the humble Puritans whom Milton would not deign to read; Mark Pattison fears that those who have consulted the *Tractate* with the hope of getting any practical hints or guidance must have been grievously disappointed; on the other hand, Phillips Brooks is surprised that this great Englishman could so thoroughly anticipate all that our modern education has tried to realize. The essay is modern in that it emphasizes the need of developing the individual physically, mentally, morally, and aesthetically. His ideal is lofty, "I call, therefore, a complete and generous education, that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." One gets the impression that Milton has in mind the education of men who are to serve as judges, generals, leaders ecclesiastical and civil, in short, the privileged classes whose business shall be the ruling of the masses.

The *Areopagitica*, called by W. H. Prescott in his *History of Ferdinand and Isabella* "The most splendid argument perhaps the world had then witnessed on behalf of intellectual liberty." appeared in 1644. It is a plea for the liberty of free discussion, for the freedom of the press. It is written at white heat, with a spiritual fervor which produces an impassioned prose worthy of the writer of *Paradise Lost*. Many consider it the high-water mark of his prose writings. This passage has been much quoted:

"Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: Methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance; while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms."

Becomes Latin Secretary.—On January 30, 1649, King Charles I was executed; on the 13th of February Milton published his pamphlet on *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, trying to prove that any one who has the power has the right to

put a tyrant or wicked king to death, "if the ordinary Magistrates have neglected or deny'd to do it." A month after this, when he was forty-one years of age, he was appointed Latin Secretary, or Secretary of Foreign Tongues. The salary was £288 and some shillings and pence. He held the office until the return of the monarchy in 1660. We must not make the mistake of thinking that his office was as important as that of a member of the cabinet; he was rather the literary clerk of the Foreign Office. In a time when Latin was the language of diplomacy and controversy, this scholar would be valuable as a writer and translator of Latin, and also as a defender of the Commonwealth, especially in a time when the writer of controversial pamphlets depended upon citations from the classics to add force to his argument. We soon find Milton engaged in a wordy and bitter warfare against all monarchy-upholding Europe. He wrote twenty-five pamphlets, four of which were in Latin. In addition to this he wrote 132 state letters for Cromwell, and 17 for Richard during his Protectorate.

Some of the Pamphlets. — The *Eikonoclastes* is his reply to the *Eikon Basilike,* a book of prayers and meditations then accepted as the product of the late King's last thoughts. It had a wide circulation and increased the sympathy for the unfortunate ruler. Milton's reply is an emphatic continuation of the argument of his first pamphlet that it is right to kill a bad king. The fourth pamphlet, *The Defensio pro Populo Anglicano,* "sent his name over the whole of educated Europe." It is a reply to the learned Salmasius, whose defense of Charles I had attracted attention on the Continent. Milton resorted to ridicule, and by scorning the Latin and abusing the person of the learned Leyden professor made him the laughing stock of the envious scholars of Europe. The *Defensio Secunda* is a reply to Morus, who is supposed to have answered in defence of Salmasius in a tract entitled *Regii Sanguinis Clamor* (The Cry of the Royal Blood). Salmasius had died in 1653, but that did not prevent Milton from indulging in the bitterest invectives against him, as well as against Morus and Ulac the printer. Brooke calls it "the most merciless

thing in our literature." The controversy continued, Morus denying that he was the author, and Milton insisting that he was at least responsible for it. It is now understood that the author was Peter du Moulin.

Two months before the return of the monarchy, Milton, apparently unheeding or unconscious of the trend of events, published *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth.* Like Carlyle two centuries later, Milton had little respect for the wisdom of the masses. Intense republican that he was, his idea of the way to maintain a republic would find little sympathy today. He suggests that there should be a council of the ablest men who should sit in perpetuity and govern the people. With the return of the monarchy Milton's activity in controversy ceases, and, after a brief time of hiding until the Act of Indemnity in August, he is able to turn his talent to an undertaking that shall place him among the immortals of English song.

More Biographical Facts. — Before taking up a discussion of *Paradise Lost* it will be well to touch upon some of the events in Milton's life which we have omitted in our study of his prose. His father, to whom again and again both in prose and poetry Milton acknowledges his deepest obligation, died in 1646. About a year later, Milton gave up his private school and moved from his large house in Barbican to a smaller one in High Holborn. When he entered upon his duties as Latin Secretary he moved to Charing Cross, then later took chambers in Whitehall, and in 1651 to "a pretty garden-house" in Petty France, Westminster. Before his death he moved to several other places in London. The last twelve years of his life he lived in a house on what is now called Bunhill Row.

It was in the summer of 1652 that his first wife died; in the same year one of the greatest physical misfortunes that can afflict any man befell him. He became blind.

"He had barely time [writes a biographer] to spell one line in the book of wisdom, before, like the wizard's volume in romance, it was hopelessly closed against him for ever. Any human being is shut out by loss

f sight from accustomed pleasures, the scholar is shut out from knowl-dge. Shut out at forty-three, when his great work was not even begun!"

In Book III of *Paradise Lost* we have this touching reference b his affliction:

"Thus with the year
Seasons return; but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of ev'n or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with a universal blank
Of Nature's works to me expung'd and ras'd,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out."

After the Restoration his fortune was reduced to about £1500, nd he lived in more humble circumstances, yet it is wrong to nagine him as living in poverty at any time. His home life oes not appear to have been pleasant, although there is an npression that his third wife, Elizabeth Minshull, did much to inister to his comfort. "A genteel person, a peaceful and greeable woman," is Aubrey's testimony. The saddest feature out his home life is the unpleasant relationship existing between im and his three daughters. The daughters are censured for eir unfilial attitude toward the great man. "They made noth-g of deserting him," he was heard to say. Of Deborah, who ved to be seventy-four, it is reported that in her old age she oke of him with tenderness. Had he had sons instead of aughters, he doubtless would have expended much enthusiasm their education, but with his narrow view of woman's place e did nothing to give them that education which would enable em to enter into sympathetic companionship with his great ms and work. While it is to be regretted that his daughters d so little regard for their blind father, one cannot help feeling at Milton himself must have been largely to blame.

Last Days.— Blind, disappointed in his political hopes for a public, with diminished income, and with unfilial daughters,

Milton presents a sad spectacle. And yet this is but one side of the shield. The man who could produce *Paradise Lost* under such circumstances is not a man to be pitied. The richness of his inner life could compensate in part for the lack of ordinary comforts. There were many moments when with Emerson he might sing:

> "If Thought unlock her mysteries,
> If Friendship on me smile,
> I walk in marble galleries,
> I talk with kings the while."

For he was not without friends, among whom were Andrew Marvell, Dr. Paget, who selected the poet's third wife, Cyriack Skinner, his nephew Edward Phillips, and the Quaker, Thomas Ellwood, who sometimes read to him. Among his recreations were walking in his garden, indulging in pleasant and satiric conversation with his friends, and playing the organ and bass-viol.

"In his gray coat, at the door of his house in Bunhill Fields, he sits on clear afternoons; a proud, ruggedly genial old man, with sharp satiric touches in his talk, the untunable fibre in him to the last. Eminent foreigners come to see him; friends approach reverently, drawn by the splendor of his discourse. It would range, one can well imagine, in glittering freedom, like 'arabesques of lightning' over all ages and all literatures. He was the prince of scholars; a memory of superlative power waiting, as submissive handmaid, on the queenliest imagination. The whole spectacle of ancient civilization, its cities, its camps, its landscapes, was before him. There he sat in his gray coat, like a statue cut in granite. England had made a sordid failure, but he had not failed. His soul's fellowship was with the great Republicans of Greece and Rome, and with the Psalmist and Isaiah and Oliver Cromwell."

Late at night, on November 8, 1674, he passed away "with so little pain that the time of his expiring was not perceived by those in the room." Four days later he was buried in the chancel of St. Giles, Cripplegate.

His body was accompanied to its last resting place by "All the learned and great friends in London, not without a friendly concourse of the vulgar."

Paradise Lost

First Published. — Final arrangements for the publication of *Paradise Lost* were made on April 27, 1667. The publisher, Samuel Symmons, paid Milton five pounds for the poem and promised to pay the like sum of five pounds for each of the first three editions of thirteen hundred copies. Milton lived to receive ten pounds, and his widow in 1680 yielded her rights to Symmons for eight pounds. Much has been written about the paucity of compensation received by the author of *Paradise Lost,* but it is doubtful whether a similar poem today would yield either publisher or poet much more than the profit received then. The first edition was exhausted in eighteen months, and the second was in the market in 1674, the year of Milton's death. With Mr. Garnett we may feel, "As for Milton, we may almost rejoice that he should have reaped no meaner reward than immortality."

A Long Meditated Upon Poem. — From his jotting on a MS. now in the library of the University of Cambridge we have proof that Milton had had in mind for many years the composition of a long poem. In the years between 1640-1642 he had thought of the theme which he many years afterwards wrought into epic form. His first intention was to compose a drama. We are told by Aubrey and Phillips that the invocation of Satan to the Sun, *Paradise Lost,* book iv, 13-41, was composed about 1642 and intended to be the introduction to the drama.

After the long period of his political activities, during which time the hope of doing some monumental work never died, he turned again to the subject with a mind deepened and enriched by the rugged contact with the world of actualities. Aubrey tells us that the poem was completed in 1663. Two years later he showed it to Ellwood. It is likely that the Plague and the Great Fire delayed the publication to 1667.

The Story. — The first edition consisted of ten books; the second appeared in twelve, the seventh and the tenth being each divided into two. In 1668 Milton prefaced the poem with an introductory paragraph entitled "The Verse," and each book was

introduced by "The Argument," or outline of contents. I "The Verse" it is explained that "The measure is English hero verse without rime, as that of Homer in Greek, and Vergil i Latin; rime being no necessary adjunct or true ornament o age to set off wretched matter and lame meter."

The story is

> "Of Man's first disobedience, and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world, and all our woe, . . ."

But before we reach the downfall of man, we are introduced t the causes and incidents that led to the downfall. Satan and hi followers have been cast from Heaven into Hell, and there o the burning lake the defiant Arch-fiend gathers his fallen peer together to sit in council. How shall they revenge themselve upon the Almighty? The Second Book contains the delibera tions of the council which finally decides that to ruin God' fairest creation would be fitting revenge upon the Creator. Th Third Book leads us into Heaven, where God, seeing Satan o his mission toward the world, points him out as he predicts t the Son the downfall of Man's lofty estate. The Son amid th hallelujahs of the heavenly hosts offers himself as a ransom In the Fourth Book, considered by some the most varied in it beauty of all the twelve, Satan has found Paradise and see Adam and Eve in their pristine innocence and beauty. He learn that they were forbidden to eat of the Tree of Knowledge Gabriel, the keeper of the gate of Paradise, is warned by Uri of the presence of an evil spirit plotting the ruin of the happ pair. The Fifth opens with Eve's account of a dream, a pre monition of trouble; then follows their morning worshi expressed by a wonderful Hymn of Praise; the angel Raphae warns Adam of the danger he is in, and gives an account of th fall of Satan. In the Sixth Book Raphael continues his accoun with the description of the war in Heaven. The Seventh Boo opens with an invocation to Urania to sustain the poet in th remaining half of his celestial flight, and then continues with th

story of Creation. The Eighth Book presents the long-awaited catastrophe: Eve is flattered by the Serpent, she yields, and eats of the fruit of the forbidden Tree. Adam chooses "to incur divine displeasure for her sake." Books Ten, Eleven, and Twelve have three aims: "to justify the ways of God to Man," to complete the story of the Fall, and to show that there shall at last appear a Redeemer of Mankind. When the story ends we see the first parents as they leave Paradise. The lines have a simplicity befitting the picture—

> "Some natural tears they dropp'd, but wip'd them soon;
> The world was all before them, where to choose
> Their place of rest, and Providence their guide:
> They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow,
> Through Eden took their solitary way."

Some Characteristics of Paradise Lost.—*1. Its Theme.*—In selecting a theme widely known Milton chose wisely, for an epic must deal with an event of universal interest. The wisdom of his choice can be seen by comparing his theme with that of the Arthurian legend, a topic at one time engaging the thought of the Puritan poet. The Arthurian legend is widely known, but for every one who knows Arthur and the knights of his Table Round, there are ten who are familiar with the biblical story of the creation and the fall of man. While it is true that the biblical nature of the subject imposed some limitations upon the freedom of the poet, and equally true that the poet's theology has already become obsolete, yet it is to be observed that the plot of an epic must be simple and that Milton's theology need be no more of a hindrance to the grandeur of *Paradise Lost* than an antiquated mythology is to the *Iliad*.

2. Its Sublimity.—To describe Heaven, Hell, the Garden of Eden, to carry on dialogue in which the protagonists of the drama are God, Satan, angels, demons, and our first parents, is a task worthy of the most massive intellect and of the most brilliant imagination. English, Dutch, German, and Italian poets have attempted a work similar to Milton's. He alone has succeeded. To do so required a rare combination of intellect, taste, imagina-

tion, and technical skill in versification. He is the master of the grand manner. If the adjective sublime dare be applied to any piece of literature, to what portion can it more fittingly be applied than to the first four books of *Paradise Lost?* In reading them we feel "like pigmies transported to a world of giants."

3. Its Style.—In harmony with the sublimity of thought and imagery is the sustained elevation of style. Style, we say, is the man, and Milton is of the race of prophets who dwell in the shadow of the Almighty. With a mind enriched by the study of the great classics of antiquity, with years of training in poetic composition, with a soul that dwelt apart, he brought to the creation of *Paradise Lost* a training that expressed itself in a sustained elevation of style. The style is not perfect, for its involved sentence structure betrays the Latinism of the classic scholar, but neither is it lacking in surprising directness; the majesty of its sonorous diction is varied by passages whose charming simplicity has the freshness of the dew of Eden.

Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes.—In 1671 these two poems were published. *Paradise Regained* was finished in 1666. There is a story to the effect that Ellwood the Quaker asked Milton, "Thou hast said much here of Paradise lost, but what hast thou to say of Paradise found?" When the plague was over, Milton came back to London and showed Ellwood *Paradise Regained.* In this poem we have the old story of the conflict between good and evil. It is a theme common to all the great works of literature, modern and ancient. Here it is figured in the conflict between Christ and Satan, as related in the story of the temptation of Christ in the New Testament. Milton himself is said to have preferred *Paradise Regained* to *Paradise Lost,* but the public has never agreed with that preference.

Samson Agonistes is in the form of a drama, but as its preface declares, "never intended to the stage." Its dignity, austerity, and Greek simplicity of diction have been much admired. The chief interest in the poem is its revelation of the mind of the old bard as he nears the end of his days. He, like Samson, is blind, deserted, surrounded by his carousing enemies,

but like Samson he is of good courage, believing in the ultimate triumph of righteousness. Professor Seeley calls the drama, "the thundering reverberation of a mighty spirit struck by the plectrum of disappointment."

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CHAPTER V

Dryden

DRYDEN is of the first rank of those who belong to the second class of writers; great as a critic and satirist and poet, he falls short of the supreme gift which enables the seer to reveal a world of beauty and goodness to humanity. When Dryden was born Shakspere had been dead for fifteen years, and Ben Jonson had six years yet to live; Milton had yet to write *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso,* while *Paradise Lost* was far in the future. So closely is the life of Dryden linked with the greatest names in English literature, and yet how remote in spirit and temper seem Dryden and his age from the age and men of the Elizabethan period! He belongs to his successors, to Swift, to Addison, to Pope — men who were younger respectively by thirty-six, forty-one, and fifty-seven years. He belongs to an age of religious and political trickery and turmoil, to a time when society was artificial and corrupt and literature was characterized by vigor and common-sense rather than by sweetness and imagination. Dryden himself had a robust nature; had his delicacy and refinement of taste equalled his intellectual sturdiness, his writings would have a charm which they often lack.

Dr. Johnson, whose *Life of Dryden* has many admirable qualities, in summing up Dryden's general service to the English language, wrote:

> "What was said of Rome, adorned by Augustus, may be applied by an easy metaphor to English poetry embellished by Dryden: *Lateritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit.* (He found it brick and left it marble.)"

He has also been called the lock by which the waters of English poetry were let down from the mountains of Shakspere and Milton to the plain of Pope. As critic, dramatist, satirist, poet,

nd master of prose, he holds deservedly a high place in the istory of English literature.

The Beginnings. — Concerning the details of Dryden's life, specially those *personalia* which make interesting the childhood nd youth of a distinguished man, we know very little. We now that he was born on or about the ninth of August, 1631, the rectory belonging to his maternal grandfather, at Aldinkle All Saints, a village in Northamptonshire. Erasmus ryden, the father, was the third son of a baronet; his mother, Iary Pickering, was the daughter of Rev. Henry Pickering. ryden, therefore, was well-born, belonging to that class of nglish society whose heads of families were squires and rectors. is ancestors on both sides had been partisans of the Puritan ause, which may account for Dryden's first poetic zeal for romwell.

He attended Westminster School in London, where he came nder the direction of a famous disciplinarian, Dr. Busby, and 1650, at the age of nineteen, he entered Trinity College, Camridge. Here he received his bachelor's degree in 1654, but ere is a probability that he remained there for three more years. is curious that he never refers to his university in terms of ffectionate regard; he even goes so far as to praise its great val at the expense of his own:

> "Oxford to him a dearer name shall be
> Than his own mother university;
> Thebes did his green unknowing youth engage,
> He chooses Athens in his riper age."

It was in 1654 that his father died, leaving two-thirds of the lakesley estates to his son John, the other third to revert to him n the death of the mother. The estate comprised about two undred acres, and the income from the rents, which in an age hen rents were rising Dryden generously allowed to remain ationary, amounted to £60 a year. It is estimated that Dryden's hare had a purchasing power equal to about $1000 in the money f today.

Marriage. — After leaving the university in 1657 he took up

his residence in London. At first he probably lived with his first publisher, Herringman, with whom he was connected until 1679, when Jacob Tonson became his publisher. On the first of December, 1663, he married Lady Hastings Howard, Sir Robert's sister, and daughter of the Earl of Berkshire. There is a tradition that Lady Hastings was neither as good nor as attractive as she should have been and that the marriage was not a happy one. Sir Walter Scott thinks that Dryden's writings contain matrimonial references which indicate "an inward consciousness of domestic misery," but Saintsbury believes that Scott has overstated, for the evidence of mutual unhappines is almost *nil*. It is possible that Dryden himself was wanting in those qualities which make for domestic tranquillity. In the absence of any direct information, it may be well to assume that his married life was not an unhappy one. One might infer that his alliance with the distinguished Howard family furthered his fortunes, but the evidence indicates that he won his way without any favors from his noble kinsmen.

Poetic Beginnings.—The earliest literary production that has come down to us is a poem on the death of Lord Hastings, a fellow pupil while Dryden was at Westminster. A little later he contributed some verses of a religious nature to a volume gotten up by his friend, John Hoddesdon. The critics in general, including Lowell, consider the two poems inferior and lacking in promise, one reviewer going so far as to say that at this time Dryden had "no ear for verse, no command of poetic diction, no sense of poetic taste." But Saintsbury thinks these productions show "considerable literary faculty, a remarkable feeling after poetic style." The truth seems to be that these early productions were neither better nor worse than the early writings of other poets whose powers matured slowly. There is one conceit in the first poem that is a striking illustration of bad taste in poetry—

> "Was there no milder way but the small-pox,
> The very filthiness of Pandora's box?
>
> . . . . . .

Blisters with pride swelled, which through his flesh did sprout
Like rosebuds, stuck in the lily-skin about.
Each little pimple had a tear in it,
To wail the fault its rising did commit."

It must be remembered that this was written when he was et but a schoolboy; to a much later period belongs the poem hat first attracted attention, the *Heroic Stanzas* written after the uneral of Oliver Cromwell. There are thirty-seven stanzas elebrating the virtues of the great Commoner, one of which eads:

"His grandeur he derived from Heaven alone,
For he was great ere Fortune made him so;
And wars, like mists that rise against the sun,
Made him but greater seem, not greater grow."

he sentiment in the thirty-sixth illustrates the danger of fore-asting political events:

"No civil broils have since his death arose,
But faction now by habit does obey;
And wars have that respect for his repose
As winds for halcyons when they breed at sea."

The next poem, *Astraea Redux,* with the sub-title of "a poem n the happy restoration and return of his sacred majesty, Charles the Second," appearing within eighteen months after he celebration of the virtues of Cromwell, is cited as an illustra-on of the facility with which Dryden changed allegiance when hrift would follow fawning. It is more than likely, however, hat it was an easy matter for Dryden to celebrate the Restora-on. He does not fit in well with the Puritan spirit, and one an readily imagine that his sympathies were with the royalists ven when he was writing the eulogy of Cromwell, and that he elcomed this opportunity to give expression to his real senti-ents. The poem, written in heroic couplets, has a "certain verydayness" of phrase, but frequently shows Dryden at his est, as in the line,

"When to be God's annointed was his crime."

He again showed his willingness to receive royal recognition by writing *To His Sacred Majesty* upon his coronation. But the most important poem of this early period is the *Annus Mirabilis*, a work of 304 quatrains. Its title page declares it to be a poem dealing with the year of wonders, 1666, containing "the progress and various successes of our naval war with Holland . . . and describing the fire of London." It attracted attention at once, and added to the growing reputation of one of whom Pepys had already written in 1664 as "Dryden, the poet I knew at Cambridge." Saintsbury considers the poem inferior to *Astraea Redux*. Its character and style can be seen in this quotation in which the poet represents the king praying for the relief of his people whose dwellings are in flames:

"O God," said he, "Thou patron of my days,
Guide of my youth in exile and distress!
Who me unfriended broughtst by wondrous ways,
The kingdom of my fathers to possess:

"Be Thou my judge, with what unwearied care
I since have labored for my people's good,
To bind the bruises of a civil war
And stop the issues of their wasting blood.

"Thou who hast taught me to forgive the ill
And recompense as friends the good misled,
If mercy be a precept of Thy will,
Return that mercy on Thy servant's head.

"Or if my heedless youth has stepped astray,
Too soon forgetful of Thy gracious hand,
On me alone Thy just displeasure lay,
But take Thy judgments from this mourning land.

"We all have sinned, and Thou hast laid us low
As humble earth from whence at first we came;
Like flying shades before the clouds we show,
And shrink like parchment in consuming flame.

. . . . . .

"O pass not, Lord, an absolute decree
Or bind Thy sentence unconditional,
But in Thy sentence our remorse foresee
And in that foresight this Thy doom recall.

"Thy threatenings, Lord, as Thine Thou mayst revoke:
But if immutable and fixed they stand,
Continue still Thyself to give the stroke,
And let not foreign foes oppress Thy land."

Dramatic Writings.— Without going into a minute division one may classify Dryden's writings as non-dramatic poems, dramas, and prose. Upon his dramatic poems he bestowed about twenty of the best years of his life, and yet when we think of Dryden we think of him as the author of *Alexander's Feast* and of some sensible criticism in straightforward prose. The plays are read only by the literary student or by the historian who wishes to get a first-hand impression of the manners and customs of Dryden's day. The critics have condemned the comedies for their vulgarity and the heroic plays for their bombast and rhyming couplets. Saintsbury, while acknowledging Dryden's dramatic work to be on a lower level than his purely poetical productions, champions the dramas. He thinks that both Scott and Dryden have suffered from critics who are unwilling to attribute excellence in several fields of activity.

"Scott's poems as poems are far inferior to his novels as novels; Dryden's plays are far inferior as plays to his satires and fables as poems. But both the poems of Scott and the plays of Dryden are a great deal better than the average critic admits."

The Wild Gallant, the first of his comedies, appeared in 1663, four years before the writing of the *Annus Mirabilis.* The play was a failure, but later Lady Castlemaine, a favorite of Charles II, gave it her approval and Dryden made alterations in the hope of making it successful, but even its most ardent apologist cannot call it a good play. This was followed by the *Rival Ladies,* a play based upon a Spanish model. Although Pepys called it "A very innocent and most pretty witty play," modern opinion

charges it with the fatal gift of dulness. The *Indian Emperor,* a heroic play, shows an advance in art and popularity. When Pepys saw the play he records in his diary that "he took no great content in it," partly because of the poor acting, but a later critic, Sir Walter Scott, considers it "a model of the heroic drama."

The other principal comedies are: *The Maiden Queen, Sir Martin Mar-All, The Enchanted Island, An Evening's Love,* and *Marriage a la Mode;* the principal heroic plays are *Tyrannic Love, or the Royal Martyr, Alamanzor and Almahide, or the Conquest of Granada,* and *Aurengzebe;* the two most important tragedies are *All for Love,* and *Don Sebastian.*

All for Love.—Let us take one of his plays, a tragedy, using it as a type. It is one of the best, if not the best, of his dramas. When published in 1678 as *All for Love; or, The World Well Lost,* its title page stated that it was written in imitation of Shakspere's style. Before we come to the play itself we have an elaborate dedication to "The Right Honourable Thomas, Earl of Danby." This gentleman was "Lord High Treasurer of England, one of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, and Knight of the Most Noble Order of The Garter." Dryden is but following the custom of a time when literature begged for favor by attaching itself to the patronage of a nobleman. The subject matter of the dedication is political rather than literary. In view of the frequent charge that Dryden himself easily changed faith and party, it is interesting to read this in the dedication:

> "He who has often changed his party, and always has made his interest the rule of it, gives little evidence of his sincerity for the public good; it is manifest he changes but for himself, and takes the people for tools to work his fortune."

After the dedication, which covers about eight pages, we have a preface of about a dozen pages and then a prologue in verse. As the dedication discusses politics, the preface discusses literature, the drama especially. "All reasonable men have long

ıce concluded, that the hero of a poem ought not to be a char-
ter of perfect virtue, for then he could not, without injustice,
made unhappy, not yet altogether wicked, because he could
t then be pitied." Discussing his own play he writes:

"The fabric of the play is regular enough, as to the inferior parts of and the unities of time, place, and action, more exactly observed, than haps the English theatre requires. Particularly the action is so much e, that it is the only of the kind without episode, or underplot; every ne in the tragedy conducing to the main design, and every act conclud- with a turn of it."

this estimate Dryden is in agreement with later criticism. In the prologue of a page in length we have lines like these:

"What flocks of critics hover here today,
As vultures wait on armies for their prey,
All gaping for the carcass of a play!"

referring to his discarding the rhyming couplet —

"He fights this day unarmed — without his rhyme;
And brings a tale which often has been told;
As sad as Dido's; and almost as old.
. . . . . .
Let those find fault whose wit's so very small,
They've need to show that they can think at all;
Errors, like straws, upon the surface flow;
He who would search for pearls must dive below.
Fops may have leave to level all they can;
As pigmies would be glad to lop a man.
Half-wits are fleas; so little and so light,
We scarce could know they live, but that they bite."

In learning that Dryden had written a play upon the same eme as Shakspere's, one would naturally suppose that the result ıs a failure. But such is not the case. *All for Love* lacks the ic grandeur, the variety, the massiveness of Shakspere's drama, t it has a dignity and intensity all its own. In his edition of e plays of Dryden, Walter Scott comments upon the simplicity d concentration of the plot of *All for Love:*

"In this respect and in discarding a number of uninteresting characters, the plan of Dryden's play must be unequivocally preferred to that of Shakespeare in point of coherence, unity, and simplicity. . . . But, having given Dryden the praise of superior address in managing the story, I fear he must be pronounced in most other respects inferior to his grand prototype. Antony, the principal character in both plays, is incomparably grander in that of Shakespeare. The majesty and generosity of the military hero is happily expressed by both poets; but the awful ruin of grandeur, undermined by passion, and tottering to its fall, is far more striking in the Antony of Shakespeare."

There are beautiful passages and quotable sayings in Dryden's play, though perhaps no single short passage so well-known as Shakspere's

"Age cannot wither her nor custom stale
Her infinite variety,"

yet how familiar is this line,

"Men are but children of a larger growth!"

Shakspere's description of the voyage of Cleopatra down the Cydnus is as follows:

"The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
Burned on the water; the poop was beaten gold;
Purple the sails, and so perfumed that
The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver,
Which to the tune of flutes kept stroke, and made
The water which they beat to follow faster,
As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
It beggar'd all description: she did lie
In her pavilion — cloth-of-gold of tissue —
O'erpicturing that Venus where we see
The fancy outwork nature; on each side her
Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling cupids,
With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem
To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
And what they undid did.
Her gentlewomen, like the Nereides,
So many mermaids, tended her i' the eyes,
And made their bends adornings; at the helm
A seeming mermaid steers; the silken tackle
Swell with the touches of those flower-soft hands

That yarely frame the office. From the barge
A strange invisible perfume hits the sense
Of the adjacent wharfs. The city cast
Her people out upon her, and Antony,
Enthron'd i' the market-place, did sit alone,
Whistling to the air, which, but for vacancy,
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too
And made a gap in Nature."

In Dryden the similar description runs —

"Her galley down the silver Cydnus rowed,
The tackling silk, the streamers waved with gold;
The gentle winds were lodged in purple sails:
Her nymphs, like Nereids, round her couch were placed;
Where she, another sea-born Venus, lay.
Dolabella. — No more; I would not hear it.
Antony. — Oh, you must!
She lay, and leant her cheek upon her hand,
And cast a look so languishingly sweet,
As if, secure of all beholders' hearts,
Neglecting, she could take them: boys, like cupids,
Stood fanning, with their painted wings, the winds,
That played about her face: but if she smiled,
A darting glory seemed to blaze abroad,
That men's desiring eyes were never wearied,
But hung upon the object: to soft lutes
The silver oars kept time; and while they played,
The hearing gave new pleasure to the sight;
And both to thought. 'Twas heaven, or somewhat more:
For she so charmed all hearts, that gazing crowds
Stood panting on the shore, and wanted breath
To give their welcome voice."

In comparing these two passages, Sir Walter Scott, whose opinion is surely worthy of consideration, has written:

"We feel almost afraid to avow a preference of Dryden, founded partly upon the easy flow of the verse, which seems to soften with the subject, but chiefly upon the beauty of the language and imagery, which is flowery without diffusiveness, and rapturous without hyperbole. I fear Shakespeare cannot be exculpated from the latter fault; yet I am sensible, it is by sifting his beauties from his conceits that his imitator has been enabled to excel him."

It may be added that Dryden said that *All for Love* is "the only play he wrote for himself," and that he especially admired the part describing the quarrel between Antony and Ventidius as the best thing he had done in dramatic writing.

Domestic and Financial Affairs.—He had three sons, the first one having been born in 1665 or 1666, the youngest in 1669. The two eldest, like their father before them, went to Westminster. During these years Dryden was a prosperous man; Malone has estimated that with his patrimony his income must have been about £700, a sum whose purchasing power would be at least three or four times as great as at present. In 1670 he was appointed poet laureate and historiographer royal.

It was during these days of prosperity that he also was on familiar terms with the habitues of the court of Charles II—Dorset, Etherege, Mulgrave, Sedley, and Rochester. In 1679 Dryden, as he was going home at night, was attacked and beaten by masked men. There is a strong suspicion that the assault was instigated by Rochester, who had become angered at Dryden by believing that Dryden was the author of an attack on him. The satire is so poor that it is not now believed that Dryden had a hand in the making.

Absalom and Achitophel.—Dryden is only a second-rate dramatist, but he is the first of satirists, his poems *Absalom and Achitophel, The Medal,* and *Mac Flecknoe* being unsurpassed in the annals of English satirical poetry. Of these three, *Absalom and Achitophel* is the most celebrated. It was published in November, 1681. To understand the sensation that the satire produced, one must remember that it appeared at a time when the nation "was frenzied with suspicion and panic." There was a bitter struggle, religious and political, as to the succession. The chief spirit of the age was the Earl of Shaftesbury, who had been scheming to place the Duke of Monmouth, a reputed illegitimate son of Charles II, before the people as the logical successor of the present king. He was the eager advocate of the Exclusion Bill, a measure to exclude James from the succession.

It was while Shaftesbury was in the Tower on the charge of high treason that *Absalom and Achitophel* appeared.

Absalom is the Duke of Monmouth; Achitophel is Shaftesbury. Other prominent characters of the day are satirized under biblical disguises which the public easily penetrated. Zimri is the Duke of Buckingham, Balaam is the Earl of Huntingdon, Caleb is Lord Grey, the "canting Nadab" is Lord Howard, and Shimei is Slingsby Bethel, the sheriff of London.

Achitophel is thus described,—

"Of these the false Achitophel was first
A name to all succeeding ages cursed;
For close designs, and crooked counsels fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unfix'd in principles and place;
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace:
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy-body to decay,

. . . . . .

Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide;
Else why should he, with wealth and honor blessed,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?

. . . . . .

In friendship false, implacable in hate;
Resolved to ruin, or to rule the state.

. . . . . .

Yet fame deserved no enemy can grudge;
The statesman we abhor, but praise the judge.
In Israel's courts ne'er sat an Abethdin
With more discerning eyes, or hands more clean,
Unbribed, unsought, the wretched to redress;
Swift of dispatch, and easy of access.
Oh! had he been content to serve the crown,
With virtues only proper to the gown;
Or had the rankness of the soil been freed
From cockle, that oppress'd the noble seed;
David for him his tuneful harp had strung,
And heaven had wanted one immortal song."

The last dozen lines of praise reveal Dryden's mastery of satire, for he knew that this tone of appreciation would heighten the

effect of his invective. It may be added that the last line means that Dryden's own poem would have been unwritten had Shaftesbury remained a judge. In extenuation of Dryden's self-praise it must be remembered that the satire was published anonymously, also that he may be jesting.

Of Zimri he writes,—

"A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
Was everything by starts, and nothing long:
But in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon.
. . . . . .
So over-violent, or over-civil,
That every man with him was God or Devil.
In squandering wealth was his peculiar art;
Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
Beggar'd by fools, whom still he found too late;
He had his jest, and they had his estate."

J. Churton Collins has written in appreciation of this satire:

"In one respect this poem stands alone in literature. A party pamphlet dedicated to the hour, it is yet immortal. No poem in our language is so interpenetrated with contemporary illusion, with contemporary portraiture, with contemporary point, yet no poem in our language has been more enjoyed by succeeding generations of readers."

The Medal.—This poem appeared about four months after the publication of *Absalom and Achitophel,* and also was published anonymously. The movement against Shaftesbury had failed; he had been freed from the Tower and his adherents had celebrated their victory by striking a medal, having on one side a portrait of Shaftesbury and on the other a sketch of London, with the inscription, *Laetamur.* There is a tradition that the king himself suggested the writing of *The Medal* to Dryden as they were walking on the Mall. The story is thus told: "If I were a poet," said the king, "and I think I am poor enough to be one, I would write a poem on such a subject in the following manner." The narrator further says that after the poem was finished

ryden took it to the royal patron, who then gave him a hundred oad pieces for it. The whole story is possible, though not prob-le. The poem, containing but 322 lines, is not so personal in its nunciations as its predecessor. "Part of it is a bitter invective ainst Shaftesbury, part an argument as to the unfitness of publican institutions for England, and the rest an *Address to e Whigs.*"

Mac Flecknoe.—*The Medal* brought out replies. Among em was one by Thomas Shadwell, entitled *The Medal of John ıyes,* a savage personal onslaught on Dryden. It is to the edit of Dryden that he seldom paid any attention to the scur-ous attacks made on him by his enemies, but in this instance made an exception. It has been suggested that Dryden poured t his wrath upon too insignificant a victim, but, as Oliver ldsmith tells us in his *Beauties of English Poetry,* there was time when Shadwell held divided reputation with Dryden him-lf. Mac Flecknoe had been a dull poet; Dryden treats Shad-ell as the son and heir of Mac Flecknoe. The poem, consisting but a few more than 200 lines, was published anonymously in arch, 1682. It has a double interest—its own merit as a ece of brilliant satire, and that it suggested to Pope the writing the *Dunciad.* These lines are among the best in the poem:

"Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,
Mature in dulness from his tender years;
Shadwell alone of all my sons is he,
Who stands confirm'd in full stupidity.
The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense.
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike through and make a lucid interval;
But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.

Religio Laici.—A month after the appearance of *Mac ecknoe,* a second part of *Absalom and Achitophel* was pub-hed. The principal part was written by Nahum Tate, but ıong the lines written by Dryden are some of his best. About

the same time that the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel* made its appearance, the *Religio Laici* was published, in November, 1682. The poem, 456 lines, is a theological discussion, concerning itself, as Dryden puts it in his prose preface, "with speculations that belong to the profession of divinity." It is interesting to find the satirist, the lyrist, and the writer of loose comedies engaged in the serious task of finding out the ways of God to man. His treatment is reverent, "I lay no unhallowed hand upon the Ark, but wait on it with the reverence that becomes me at a distance," he says in his preface.

To me the preface is far more interesting than the poem itself. The attempt to show the wisdom of the Established Church or that heathens who had not heard of Christ may yet be saved, does not lend itself readily to poetry. But that, of course, depends upon one's definition of poetry. To Dryden and his age versification lent the final art to argument. To quote from the concluding paragraph of the preface to this poem:

"The expressions of a poem designed purely for instruction ought to be plain and natural, and yet majestic: for here the poet is presumed to be a kind of lawgiver, and those qualities which I have named are proper to the legislative style. The florid, elevated, and figurative way is for the passions; for love and hatred, fear and anger, are begotten in the soul by showing their objects out of their true proportion, either greater than the life or less; but instruction is to be given by showing them what they naturally are. A man is to be cheated into passion, but to be reasoned into truth."

The poetic introduction has been much admired, Landor saying to a friend, "Nothing was ever written in hymn equal to the beginning of Dryden's *Religio Laici*." These are the opening lines:

"Dim as the borrow'd beams of moon and stars
To lonely, weary, wandering travellers,
Is Reason to the soul: and as on high
Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
Not light us here; so Reason's glimmering ray
Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
But guide us upward to a better day.

And as those nightly tapers disappear,
When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere;
So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight;
So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light."

There is little satire in the poem, but these lines show that Dryden has not forgotten the satiric touch:.

"The Book thus put in every vulgar hand,
Which each presumed he best could understand,
. . . . . .
The tender page with horny fists was gall'd;
And he was gifted most that loudest bawl'd."

The Hind and the Panther. — This poem was published in April, 1687. "If bulk and originality of plan are taken into consideration," thinks Saintsbury, this poem may be considered as Dryden's chief work. There are three parts, the total number of lines amounting to 2,592.

In February, 1685, James had become the ruling monarch, and with his ascension to the throne the Roman Catholic religion had regained its influential position. In Evelyn's Diary, under date of January 19, 1686, there is this entry, "Dryden, the famous play-writer, and his two sons . . . were said to go to mass; such proselytes were no great loss to the church." It is not surprising that both at the time of his change of faith and during the years since then Dryden has been severely criticized, for the change was made to further his own temporal interests. Consistency is not a strong characteristic in the character of this poet. This is true of his poetic faith as well as of his religious. At one time we find him stoutly defending his use of rhyme in the drama, and then condemning it and favoring blank verse. As to his religious changes, it must be said to his great credit that with the accession of William of Orange, Dryden did not change his faith, but remained true to the religion which he had espoused, although another change of conviction would have been profitable. When the Revolution made Protestantism popular, he did not abjure his faith to save his office and pension as poet laureate and historiographer.

The *Hind and the Panther* is a defense of the Roman Catholic Church by means of a dialogue between a hind, who represents the Church of Rome, and a panther, who sustains the character of the Church of England. These beasts conduct a learned discussion on transubstantiation, infallibility, church authority, and other theological questions that then engaged the public mind. Sir Walter Scott has praised the poem in these words:

"The verse in which these doctrines, polemical and political, are delivered, is among the finest specimens of the English heroic stanza. The introductory verses, in particular, are lofty and dignified in the highest degreee: as are those in which the splendour and majesty of the Church of Rome are set forth, in all the glowing colours of rich imagery and magnificent language. But the same praise extends to the versification of the whole poem. It never falls, never becomes rugged; rises with the dignified strain of the poetry; sinks into quaint familiarity, where sarcasm and humour are employed; and winds through all the mazes of theological argument without becoming either obscure or prosaic."

Translations and Odes. — Dryden's mind was well adapted for the work of translating. His was not the subjective tendency to spin poetic fancies from airy nothings. It has been estimated that the total of his translations of the classics amounts to about 30,000 lines. Among the authors whom he translated are Homer, Vergil, Ovid, Theocritus, Lucretius, Juvenal, and Horace. He also rendered some of the tales of Chaucer and Boccaccio into the language and verse of his own time.

His translations of the *Eclogues,* the *Georgics,* and the *Æneid* were done in a most acceptable manner; though, as Saintsbury points out, it seems ironical that Pope, who is most un-Homeric, should have won his reputation as a translator of Homer, and Dryden, one of the most un-Vergilian of poets, should have won praise for his *Æneid.* Pope should have given his finished art to Vergil, while Dryden's masculine force would have found its freest expression in translating the vigorous lines of the Greek bard.

The two *Songs for St. Cecilia's Day* are among the most notable poems of his entire career. The first was written in

687; the second, the famous ode on *Alexander's Feast,* in 1697. t. Cecilia was a legendary Roman virgin of rank who embraced hristianity in the reign of Antoninus, and whose virtues "ob- ined for her the honor of visits from angels." As the supposed ventor of the organ, she was canonized as the saint of music. n 1683 a musical society began to celebrate St. Cecilia's Day. was for the celebration of two of these festivals that Dryden's les were composed. Concerning the composition of the *Alex- nder's Feast* ode, the story is told that he sat up the whole of ne night to write it, finishing the ode at one sitting. The more robable version is that of Dr. Birch, who states that Dryden rote to a friend that he was almost a fortnight in compos- g and correcting it. The lines of the chorus are known verywhere:

"Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair."

f this ode the French critic Taine has written enthusiastically, A masterpiece of rapture which Victor Hugo alone has come o to." More discriminatingly, John Henry Newman has id:

"Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* is a magnificent composition, and has gh poetical beauties; but to a refined judgment there is something intrin- cally unpoetical in the end to which it is devoted, the praises of revelry d sensuality."

His Prose. — Poet, satirist, dramatist, and critic, he was also master of vigorous prose. It may be no exaggeration to say at his influence upon our prose outweighs all his other contribu- ons to English literature. The very quality of mind that makes m a poet of the second order, the absence of that wild frenzy hich sweeps the soul of the poet into the empyrean, has made s prose clear, orderly, and precise. In the striking phrase of owell, "English prose is indebted to Dryden for having freed

it from the cloister of pedantry." To turn to Dryden after reading the prose of the Elizabethans, is to turn from strained metaphors and Latinized sentence-structure to the direct and idiomatic English of today. "Dryden himself," writes Mr. Barrett Wendell, "had given English prose its most masterly, almost its final, form." Good examples of his prose are to be found in the many prefaces to his poems and dramas, and in the familiar *Essay of Dramatic Poesy.*

Last Days.— Dryden was evidently a hard worker all his life, and his last years were no exception. His three sons, all of whom died within ten years after their father's death, held office in the service of the Pope at Rome. His wife lived to 1714, when she died, old and insane. Dryden himself died on the first of May, 1700, and was buried in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

Writes Saintsbury:

"It is astonishing when one comes to examine the matter, how vague and shadowy our personal knowledge of Dryden is. A handful of anecdotes, many of them undated and unauthenticated except at third and fourth hand, furnish us with almost all that we do know. That he was fond of fishing, and prided himself upon being a better fisherman than Durfey; that he took a great deal of snuff; and that he did not drink much until Addison, in the last years of his life, induced him to do so almost exhausts the list of such traits which are recorded by others. His 'down look,' his plumpness, his fresh colour are points in which tradition are pretty well supported by the portraits which exist, and by such evidence as can be extracted from the libels against him. The famous picture of him at Will's, which every one repeats, and which Scott has made classical in the *Pirate,* is very likely true enough to fact, and there is no harm in thinking of Dryden in the great coffee-house, with his chair in the balcony in summer, and by the fire in winter, passing criticisms and paying good-natured compliments on matters literary. . . . Dryden, no doubt, was not austerely virtuous. . . . On the other hand, all trustworthy testimony concurs in praising his amiable and kindly disposition, his freedom from literary arrogance, and his willingness to encourage and assist youthful aspirants in literature. Mercilessly hard as he hit his antagonists, it must be remembered that he was rarely the first to strike . . . we shall be safe in saying that, though he was assuredly no saint there were not so many better men then living than John Dryden.

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CHAPTER VI

Swift

SWIFT is one of the great figures of the eighteenth century, the robust product of an age when beauty and romance were renounced in favor of reason and satire. He is a strange man, concerning whose character there is striking diversity of opinion. Taine calls him a "hangman," Thackeray a "Yahoo," and Macaulay condemns him as the "apostate politician, the ribald priest, the perjured lover." On the other hand, Carlyle thinks him "the greatest man of that time," and Addison, Swift's contemporary, praises him as "the most agreeable companion, the truest friend, and the greatest genius of his age."

It is easy to misjudge the motives and actions of our neighbor, and at this distance of time it is impossible to judge with fairness and accuracy so strange and contradictory a character as Swift; but we have his numerous writings, and by them he must be estimated. A man cannot escape putting himself into his work. From Swift's writings we gather that his sensitive soul burned with demoniac rage as he beheld a world of injustice. In his anger and disgust he lashed society with his clever wit and biting sarcasm. It is his misfortune that to this scorn of injustice, this hatred of sham, there was not added that sweet sympathy which loves and pities even while it scourges.

Birth.— Jonathan Swift, the father of the author, had gone to Ireland, along with four of his brothers, to retrieve the fortunes which had suffered in the downfall of the royalist's cause. The eldest brother, Godwin, prospered as a barrister in Dublin. Jonathan incurred the family displeasure by marrying Mistress Abigail Eric, the daughter of "a poor but ancient Leicestershire family." He became Steward of the King's Inn, and in 1667, some months before the birth of his great son, Jonathan Swift,

e died. Jonathan was born in a house in Hoey's Court, Dublin, n November 30, 1667.

Swift has supplied us with a fragment of an autobiography rom which we learn that his infancy was passed in England. He rites in the third person:

"When he was a year old, his nurse, who was a woman of Whitehaven, being under an absolute necessity of seeing one of her relations, ho was then extremely sick, and from whom she expected a legacy, id being at the time extremely fond of the infant, stole him on shipoard unknown to his mother and uncle, and carried him with her to Vhitehaven, where he continued for almost three years. For, when the natter was discovered, his mother sent orders by all means not to hazard second voyage till he could be better able to bear it. The nurse was so areful of him that before he returned he had learned to spell, and by ie time he was three years old he could read any chapter in the Bible."

Education.—Left to the care of his uncle Godwin, he was ent to Kilkenny school, the Eton of Ireland. It is remarkable nat from this same school came Berkeley, the eminent metahysician, Congreve, the clever writer of comedy, and Swift, the een satirist. After remaining at Kilkenny for eight years, he ntered Trinity College, Dublin, in April, 1682. Later in life wift wrote concerning this period of his life that,

by the ill-treatment of his nearest relations, he was so discouraged and ink in his spirits that he too much neglected his academic studies, for ome parts of which he had no great relish by nature, and turned himself reading history and poetry, so that when the time came for taking his egree of Bachelor of Arts, although he had lived with great regularity id due observance of the statutes, he was stopped of his degree for dulss and insufficiency; and at last hardly admitted in a manner little to his redit, which is called in that college *speciali gratia.*"

n other words, Swift's university career was not eminently sucessful; in the English phrase, he was "plucked," but was given n extension of time to work out his A.B. degree.

Moor Park.—After receiving his A.B. degree in February, 685, he remained at Trinity to qualify for the Master's degree. here is evidence that during the next three years he was at times troublesome student and subjected to discipline. In 1688, the

year of the Revolution, Trinity College came under the influence of the Jacobites, and Swift, without having received his Master's degree, went to England to his mother, who was then residing in Leicestershire. His uncle Godwin, having a large family of his own, and embarrassed by losses incurred in foolish speculation, was no longer able to help Swift. One would suppose that Swift, appreciating the many demands made upon his benefactor, would have the kindliest feelings towards his uncle, and yet when in after years he was asked, "Was it not your uncle Godwin who educated you?" "Yes, he gave me the education of a dog." "Then," fittingly retorted the inquirer, "you have not the gratitude of a dog."

Swift now turned to Sir William Temple for assistance. Sir William was one of the most important personages of his age. He had been a member of Parliament; was minister at Brussels in 1665; negotiated the treaty of the Triple Alliance in 1668; was ambassador at The Hague, 1668-71; formed a plan for a privy council and became a leading member of it, 1679; and had retired from public life, highly respected for integrity, in 1681. At the time of Swift's association with him he was engaged in literary labors.

Sir William had been a friend of Godwin Swift, and Lady Temple was in some way related to Swift's mother. Temple could make good use of an assistant in his literary work, and so when there came a request from the Swift family asking for Temple's influence in procuring an opening for the energies of the young Trinity scholar, Temple wrote back that he would take young Jonathan into his own household in the capacity of private secretary. In 1689 we find the young man of twenty-two domiciled at Moor Park as the secretary of the famous diplomatist and retired scholar. His duties were to read to his patron, copy out the rough drafts of the memoirs Sir William was writing, and keep the accounts. Either because Sir William was pompous and overbearing, or because Swift was unduly sensitive, the lot of the secretary was not a happy one. Swift afterwards complained that he was treated like a schoolboy.

In May, 1690, suffering from attacks of vertigo and deafness, ift returned to Ireland in the hope that a change of climate ght benefit him and that there might be an opening for work re congenial. He carried a letter of recommendation to Sir bert Southwell, the Irish secretary, which stated that the rer was honest, diligent, wrote a good hand, and knew Latin, eek, and a little French. In view of Swift's later achievents in literature and politics, we cannot say that this letter of commendation errs by over-statement of ability.

Failing to find congenial employment in Ireland, he returned Moor Park. In 1692, Oxford, recognizing the years of gradue study at Trinity and also the influence of Temple, conferred e degree of M.A. upon Swift. About this time Temple began entrust him with more important duties. He had the honor of interview with King William III, in which he tried to perade that dignitary of the importance of signing the Triennial ct, a bill to have Parliament meet every three years.

In 1694 Swift again left Moor Park, was ordained deacon in ctober, and priest in January, 1695. Temple assisted him to ocure the prebend of Kilroot, a small charge worth about £100 ear. This holding he resigned two years later, but before this, ay, 1696, he had tired of Ireland and returned to Moor Park, ere he remained until Temple's death in 1699.

In 1700 we find Swift at Laracor, a village about twenty miles om Dublin. This place, with the addition of several minor arges, gave him an income of £230 a year. His congregation Laracor sometimes numbered fewer than fifteen. There is a ry that on a stormy day, when the congregation consisted of t Roger, the sexton, Swift gravely began the service with, Dearly beloved Roger, the Scripture moveth *thee* and *me*."

Romance.— Swift, as has been said, is a strange character, oud and sensitive in his relations with men, fond of the admiran of women, but not always admirable in his treatment of ose who fell under the spell of his personality. He was not thout a high opinion of woman's worth, and yet his bluntness rged upon brutality, as in the case of Vanessa and Lady Bur-

lington. The three women who play a part in the romance of Swift's life are Miss Waring (Varina), Esther Johnson (Stella), and Hester Vanhomrigh (Vanessa).

Varina.—It was while at Kilroot that Swift met Miss Waring, the sister of an old Trinity College chum. From a letter addressed to her in April, 1696, we gather that Swift was desperately in love:

> "Surely, Varina, you have but a very mean opinion of the joys that accompany a true, honorable, unlimited love; yet . . . all other sublunary things are dross in comparison. Is it possible you can be yet insensible to the prospect of a rapture and delight so innocent and exalted?"

For some years she refused the advances of this ardent lover, who was willing to "forego all for her sake," on the plea of her own ill-health and his lack of means to support a family. But in 1700, when his fortune had slightly improved, she became the urgent wooer and Swift the reluctant lover. In May, 1700, he wrote a letter in which he raises objections and imposes conditions of a most unloverlike character. Among other questions, he asks whether she will be willing to improve her mind, whether she will always have enough good nature "as to endeavor by soft words to smooth any rugged humor occasioned by the cross incidents of life? Shall the place wherever your husband is thrown be more welcome than courts or cities without him?" When she shall be ready to answer questions such as these, he shall be ready to marry her "whether your person be beautiful or your fortune be large. Cleanliness in the first, and competency in the other, is all I look for." It should be needless to add that the studied insults of this letter had the desired effect, and henceforth Varina passed out of the life of Swift.

Hester.—Hester Vanhomrigh, or Vanessa, as Swift familiarly called her, was the daughter of the widow of a Dutch merchant. Swift had met the family as early as 1708, but it was two years later, while Swift was in London, that his frequent visits to the family brought about an intimacy that resulted in a strong friendship between Swift and Hester, and then ripened into love, at least on the part of Hester. She was then in her

twenty-first year, attractive, intellectual, and with a taste for the higher arts. When he left London for Ireland in 1713, Vanessa was desperately in love. Upon his return in 1714, their association was resumed. Upon the death of Mrs. Vanhomrigh he wrote a kind and sympathetic letter, even offering to become surety in case she needed to borrow money; but a little later, knowing that he must soon return again to Ireland, and fearing she might wish to follow him, he became moody and cold. When she indicated an intention of coming to Ireland, after his departure from London, he unsuccessfully tried to dissuade her. At the time when his relations with Stella were most friendly, he continued on friendly terms with Vanessa, although he was hoping to relieve himself of an embarrassing situation by finding an admirer for Vanessa. It seems evident that she wasted her youth in a hopeless passion for Swift, who probably never intended to marry her, but who was weak enough to crave the flattery of an admiration which he could not return. By the year 1723, feeling that her health was failing, and wishing to know definitely her place in the affections of Swift, she wrote a letter to him, demanding a final decision as to his preference between her and Stella. Swift

"acted with the fury into which an irresolute man always falls when he at last finds himself face to face with stern necessity. He took Vanessa's letter, and rode off with it to Marley Abbey. Striding into the lady's apartment, he flung her letter on the table, and departed without a word. We know from Vanessa herself that Swift's countenance was preeminently fitted to express the emotion of infuriated rage. No words were needed to tell her that all was over between them."

Although she died in May of the same year, it is hardly fair to infer that her death was caused by her disappointment. One does not experience any regret, however, at learning that before her death she revoked a will she had made in favor of Swift.

Stella. — While the story of the relationship of Swift and Stella is not altogether a satisfactory one, it has more of pleasantness than either of the preceding two. Her life is interwoven with almost the whole of Swift's. When he first came to Moor

Park, he found there a young girl of little more than eight years of age, living in the family of Temple with her widowed mother. Attracted from the first by the bright and winsome ways of the little dark-eyed girl, the lonely and unappreciated young secretary enjoyed many an hour in tutoring her, unconsciously developing an interest and laying "the foundations of an intimacy the tale of which is the most fascinating in romantic history." For thirty years, in whatever other directions Swift's affections may have temporarily swayed, Stella retained the largest part in the heart of the great satirist.

After the death of Temple, Swift suggested to the homeless Stella and her friend Mrs. Dingley that they could live more economically in Ireland than in England. Says Leslie Stephen:

"This change of abode naturally made people talk. . . . Swift was now (1701) in his thirty-fourth year, and Stella a singularly beautiful and attractive girl of twenty. The anomalous connexion was close, and yet most carefully guarded against scandal. In Swift's absence, the ladies occupied his apartments at Dublin. When he and they were in the same place, they took separate lodgings. Twice, it seems, they accompanied him on visits to England. But Swift never saw Esther Johnson except in presence of a third person."

His *Journal to Stella,* covering a period of two years and a half, 1710–13, is a revelation of the intimacy between the two, as well as of the opinion held by Swift of the men whom he met. He characterizes Bolingbroke as a "thorough rake;" Oxford, as a "pure trifler;" Marlborough, as "covetous as hell and as ambitious as a prince of it." We catch glimpses of Congreve, now almost blind; of Arbuthnot, genial and friendly; of Steele, gay and irresponsible; and of Queen Anne, the taciturn. At a time when partisanship in politics was running high, he writes of Addison: "Mr. Addison and I are as different as black and white, and I believe our friendship will go off, . . . but I love him still as well as ever, though we seldom meet."

The "little language" which he used in his *Journal to Stella* is probably a reminiscence of their early days at Moor Park. He frequently addresses Stella and Mrs. Dingley as "Sirrahs,"

"Girls," "Dearest Lives." He writes, "I assure oo it im vely late now; but zis goes to-morrow; and I must have some time to converse with our own deerichar MD [my dear, probably]. Nite de deer Sollahs." And again, "And now let us see what this saucy, dear letter of MD says. . . . What says Pdf [Podefar, possibly poor, dear, foolish rogue] to me, pray? says it. Come and let me answer for you for your ladies. Hold up your head like a good letter."

There has been much discussion pro and con as to whether Swift and Stella were married. Lord Orrery, in his life of Swift, published in 1751, thinks that "Stella was the concealed but undoubted wife of Dr. Swift, and, if my informations are right, she was married to him in the year 1716 by Dr. Ashe, then Bishop of Clogher." Three years later Dr. Delaney agrees with Orrery without producing any evidence for his belief, and Mr. Deane Swift, in a publication of 1756, repeats the statement. Samuel Madden, a man of erratic character, repeated the rumor to Dr. Samuel Johnson. But on the whole, there is no proof supporting the theory that Swift and Stella were married. There is no record of the marriage, nor did Swift, a man averse to subterfuge, ever acknowledge Stella as his wife. In his last will and testament he calls Stella a single woman, and in all references to her after her death he calls her his "dearest friend." Most significant of all, Mrs. Dingley, Stella's closest companion for many years, Mrs. Brent, Swift's housekeeper, and Dr. John Lyon, a close friend of the dean's in his declining years, all denied the story of the marriage.

Stella died on January 28, 1728. Ill himself and unable to attend the funeral, Swift wrote a eulogy from which we quote these extracts:

"This day, being Sunday, January 28, 1728, about eight o'clock at night, a servant brought me a note with an account of the death of the truest, most virtuous, and valuable friend that I, or perhaps any other person, was ever blessed with. . . .

"Never was any of her sex born with better gifts of the mind, or who more improved them by reading and conversation. Yet her memory was not of the best, and was impaired in the latter years of her life. But I

cannot call to mind that I ever heard her make a wrong judgment of persons, books, or affairs. . . . She had a gracefulness, something more than human, in every motion, word, and action. Never was so happy a conjunction of civility, freedom, easiness, and sincerity.

In those days persons in the upper and middle classes were buried at night. On the evening of January 30, Swift wrote:

"This is the night of the funeral, which my sickness will not suffer me to attend. It is now nine at night, and I am removed into another apartment, that I may not see the light in the church, which is just over against the window of my bed-chamber. . . .

"She was never known to cry out, or discover any fear, in a coach or on horseback, or any uneasiness by those sudden accidents with which most of her sex, either by weakness or affectation, appear so much disordered. . . . She spoke in the most agreeable voice, in the plainest words, never hesitating, except out of modesty before new faces, where she was somewhat reserved; nor, among her nearest friends, ever spoke much at a time. . . . When she was once convinced, by open facts, of any breach of truth or honor in a person of high station, especially in the church, she could not conceal her indignation, nor hear them named without showing her displeasure in her countenance."

The Battle of the Books.— Swift's earliest attempts at literature were in poetry. "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet," is the reputed laconic criticism of Dryden when he read one of Swift's early odes. With this verdict posterity will not disagree, for the best of Swift's verse is far inferior to the best of his prose.

Putting aside those immature writings which almost always precede a striking production by a genius, we may call *The Battle of the Books* his first work. It is a brilliant satire growing out of a famous controversy started in France by Fontanelle's declaration that the present-day writers were superior to the ancient. The French controversy had spread to England, where Sir William Temple rushed into the lists to do battle for the ancients. The Rev. Mr. Wotton promptly answered the challenge. Temple in his argument had cited Phalaris as an example of the power of the ancients; thereupon the Hon. Charles Boyle of Oxford had promptly republished his edition of the *Letters*

of Phalaris and in the preface took occasion to write disparagingly of the attainments of Dr. Bentley, the greatest classical scholar of his age. Dr. Bentley then drove Temple from the field by proving that the letters of Phalaris were a forgery.

Swift now rushed into the fray, taking sides with his patron, Temple, but more intent on satirizing the whole conflict than in advancing arguments to establish his cause. He tells us that while the moderns and ancients are drawn up in battle array, they notice a dispute between a spider and a bee. While the books were wrangling, the bee has become ensnared in the spider's web in the library. Æsop is called upon to arbitrate the dispute between the two. The bee, going to nature, stands as the representative of the ancients; the spider, evolving its web from itself, represents the moderns who extract their niceties and pedantries from their inner consciousness. The bee, in answer to the spider's boast that she has built her web with her own hands from the materials from her own body, declares that the result of the spider's toil is but a filthy cobweb, while his own product is universally prized and sought for.

"Whatever we (the ancients) have got has been by infinite labor and research, and ranging through every corner of nature; the difference is that, instead of dirt and poison, we have rather chosen to fill our hives with honey and wax, thus furnishing mankind with the two noblest of things, which are sweetness and light."

In the Homeric battle which follows, Homer, Pindar, and Vergil are the heroic combatants leading the ancients into the fray, while Temple is the gallant captain of the modern forces. In commenting upon Swift's first great success, Leslie Stephen has said:

"Swift has found out that the world is full of humbugs; and goes forth hewing and hacking with superabundant energy, not yet aware that he too may be a fallible being, and still less that the humbugs may some day prove too strong for him."

A Tale of a Tub.— This work, greater as a satire than *The Battle of the Books,* was published anonymously in 1704, although

it had been written as early as 1697. The title is derived fro the sailor's custom of throwing a tub overboard to distract t attention of the whale from the ship, which otherwise it migl injure. Likewise, this pamphlet might attract the attention the fanatics who were attacking learning and religion.

The *Tale of a Tub* is a clever satire upon the ecclesiasticis that emphasizes the differences in religious belief rather than t essential agreements. "Once upon a time," runs the tale, "ther was a man who had three sons by one wife, and all at a birth. When upon his death-bed, the father calls them to him and tel them that he has bequeathed to each of them a good coat, saying

"Now you understand that these coats have two virtues contained them; one is, that with good wearing they will last you fresh and sou as long as you live; the other is, that they will grow in the same pr portion with your bodies, lengthening and widening of themselves, so to be always fit."

For the first seven years (the first seven centuries of the Chri tian church) the brothers are faithful to the wishes of the dyin father; they keep the coats fresh and sound; but thereafter, fo lowing the changing fashions of this world, they alter the for and texture by additions and subtractions, until at last the coa have no resemblance to the originals. Finally Peter quarre with the two younger brothers, who now plan to run away. An so they ask for

"a copy of their father's will, which had now lain neglected time out mind. Instead of granting this request, Peter called them rogues, traito and all the rest of the vile names he could muster up. However, while was abroad one day upon his projects, the two youngsters watched the opportunity, made a shift to come at the will, and took a copy of it, which they saw how grossly they had been abused; their fathers havi left them equal heirs, and strictly commanded that whatever they g should lie in common between them."

The two runaway brothers take the name of Martin and Jac (Luther and Calvin), and begin to restore their coats to the original shape and texture. But they cannot agree as to wha should be done. Writes Mr. Moriarty:

"Martin pulls off the lace and fringes, but he notices that much of the embroidery is so carefully sewn in, that to cut it all out will ruin the coat. He therefore resolves to let some of it remain. Brother Jack, who is very hot-tempered, tears away at his coat with such fury that the garment is rent from top to toe, whole pieces of the cloth are in many cases torn away, while in certain places fag ends of Peter's old livery still hang on unnoticed. Martin remonstrates, but Jack refuses to listen. He accuses Martin of still hankering after Peter's gew-gaws, renounces his society, and goes his way alone (separation of the Puritans from the Anglican church). The rest of the allegory, which is a little tedious, deals mainly with the history of religion in England after the Reformation. Swift's hatred of the Dissenters is markedly displayed. He dilates on their affected differences from other men; on their habit of cant; on their dislike to church music; and on their defacement, during the Commonwealth, of the statues and paintings in English churches."

In another section of the work is the passage made famous because in it perhaps lies the germ of the idea which Carlyle afterwards elaborated into *Sartor Resartus:*

"His worshippers 'held the universe to be a large suit of clothes which invests everything: that the earth is invested by the air; the air is invested by the stars; and the stars are invested by the *primum mobile.* Look on this globe of earth and you will find it to be a very complete and fashionable dress. What is that which some call land but a fine coat faced with green? or the sea but a waistcoat of water-tabby? . . . To conclude from all, what is man himself but a micro-coat, or rather a complete suit of clothes with all its trimmings?'"

The *Tale of a Tub* was published anonymously, but it was not long before Swift was suspected of the authorship. Dr. Johnson, who never appreciated Swift's ability, doubted whether Swift could have written so brilliant a piece of work, and Swift, in his old age, when his powers were failing, said, "Good God, what a genius I had when I wrote that book!" Satiric brilliancy in writing about sacred subjects is a dangerous power, as Swift learned when he found that his efforts for advancement were hindered by the suspicion that the author of *A Tale of a Tub* was too unorthodox to be favored by ecclesiastical preferment. It is said the *Tale of a Tub* cost Swift a bishopric.

In London.—About four years of the time between 1700

and 1710 were spent in London. There he became acquainted with Addison, Pope, and Gay, whom he respected, and with the group of so-called wits, men whom he ridiculed. It was during one of these visits to London (1708), that Swift created some amusement by his publication of the *Bickerstaff Almanac*. John Partridge was an astrologer who had duped his public by the annual publication of an almanac prophesying future events. Swift, under the name of Isaac Bickerstaff, amused himself by publishing a similar almanac in which he predicted the end of Partridge, whose death was to take place on "March 29 next, about eleven at night." Soon after this date there appeared an account of Partridge's illness and death. Then the friends of Swift published a burlesque denial. By this time Partridge was aroused by the prospect of losing all his custom, so he published a protest in his almanac, declaring that he had not died, but was still alive and in business. To this Swift replied in an elaborate piece of solemn fooling, proving that Partridge must be dead.

During these years, while making acquaintance with men of literary and political standing, Swift naturally was hoping that his ability as a writer would procure an appointment to a more lucrative holding than the one at Laracor. But in June, 1709, we find him still at Laracor. Just before this, on leaving England, he had heard of the probable death of Dr. South, Bishop of Cork, and the holder of a prebend at Westminster. Swift, swallowing his pride, reminded Halifax that he would be highly pleased to become Bishop of Cork, if Dr. South died, and that "The late king promised me a prebend at Westminster, when I petitioned him in pursuance of a recommendation from Sir William Temple." Halifax replied in a highly complimentary manner, but on the death of South promoted another.

In Laracor Swift was discontented. He found there little scope for his restless intellect. He wrote to Dean Sterne:

"I am this minute very busy, being to preach today before an audience of at least fifteen people, most of them gentle, and all simple. I can send you no news; only the employment of my parishioners may, for memory's sake, be reduced under these heads: Mr. Percival is ditching

Mrs. Percival in her kitchen; Mr. Wesley is switching; Mrs. Wesley stitching; Sir Arthur Longford *riching* — which is a new word for heaping up riches."

In September, 1710, we find Swift again in London in the midst of political excitement. From 1710 to 1713 Swift enjoyed his greatest prestige. He had been an ardent Whig, but now for various reasons he became an active and influential writer on the side of the Tories. In November, 1710, he took charge of the *Examiner,* the political organ of the Tories. The Whigs had treated Swift with indifference; he would now show them the folly of their neglecting a man of his attainments. "Rot them for ungrateful dogs, I will make them repent their usage before I leave this place."

Period of Political Power. — With the supremacy of the Tories, Harley and St. John (Bolingbroke) became the political leaders. While Harley was not a great statesman, he undoubtedly had a wonderful influence upon his contemporaries; that he had some sagacity is evidenced in his recognition of Swift's value and in his success in attaching him to his cause. Within a few months after Swift's adherence to the new leaders, he had gained more influence than he had ever enjoyed. Nor had Swift become a servile follower to reach this end. When in February, 1711, Harley offered him a fifty-pound note, Swift, refusing to be treated like a hireling, demanded and received an apology. When he dined, as he frequently did, with the select group of leaders, including the Lord Chancellor (Harley) and the Secretary of State (St. John), he permitted no profanity or indecency of conversation.

In return for this intimacy with political greatness Swift devoted his talents to the furtherance of the Tory cause. From November 2, 1710, to June 14, 1711, he contributed to the weekly *Examiner.* In these articles, which at this distance appear of ordinary merit, he abuses the Whig leaders and pleads for a discontinuance of the war, which he maintains is continued for the benefit of a few avaricious men. His pamphlet, *Conduct of the Allies,* attempts to show that national interests do not demand the

war. It was first published on November 27; by the end of January 11,000 copies had been sold. During these months party feeling in England was intense; there were moments when Swift feared the overwhelming defeat of his party, and at one time requested St. John to find him some foreign post where he would be out of danger in the time of the Whigs' triumph. But with the downfall of the Duke of Marlborough, Tory supremacy, for a time at least, was established.

From contemporary records we learn that Swift's influence at this time was tremendous; at this distance it is hard to explain how an obscure "hedge-parson" in a few months could leap into a position of power where his aid was sought for by ministers of state and dukes of the realm. To a man of Swift's temperament such a position was meat and drink. In the height of his power, writes a biographer,

> "he has a Napoleonic absence of magnanimity. He likes to relish his triumph: to accept the pettiest as well as the greatest rewards; to flaunt his splendor in the eyes of the servile as well as to enjoy the consciousness of real power. But it would be a great mistake to infer that this ostentatiousness of authority concealed real servility. . . . He forced himself upon ministers by self-assertion; and he held them in awe as the lion-tamer keeps down the latent ferocity of the wild beast."

It is gratifying to note that, imperious as he was in his attitude toward his political superiors, he was most active in helping many worthy men whom he esteemed. "I will favor him as much as I can," he says of his old schoolfellow, Berkley; "this I think I am bound to in honor and conscience, to use all my little credit towards helping forward men of worth in the world."

But what was Swift getting for himself? With all this influence one would suppose that Swift might easily secure one of the best ecclesiastical appointments in the realm; but all he finally secured was the deanery of St. Patrick's, a decided advance over Laracor, but far short of what Swift had expected. There were several drawbacks: he would be obliged to live in Ireland; he would have to pay £1,000 for the house and fees, so that it would be three years before he would be the gainer. He was appointed

on April 23, 1713. A little later he wrote to Miss Vanhomrigh: "I thought I should have died with discontent; and was horribly melancholy while they were installing me; but it begins to wear off and change to dulness."

In 1714 he was called back to England to aid the declining Tory cause with his trenchant pen. But causes beyond the control of a political pamphleteer were bringing about the downfall of the party to which Swift had dedicated his powers. "The Earl of Oxford," wrote Bolingbroke to Swift, "was removed on Tuesday; the queen died on Sunday. What a world is this! and how does fortune banter us."

Before the end of August he was again in Dublin.

"So ends Swift's period of political greatness. There was much in it on which in after years he could look back with pride and satisfaction. He had won political eminence. He had drunk to the full the cup of social homage. But he had also seen a great political party undermined by disunion and destroyed by treachery. He had been drawn into bitter conflict with once-trusted friends. He had seen his own hopes of glory and advancement checked when they were at their apogee; and it was in gloom and bitterness that he entered on his retirement."*

Gulliver's Travels.—This wonderful book, Swift's masterpiece in popular estimation, is a brilliant satire on the foibles and weaknesses of humanity. Strange to say, it has always been a popular book for children, who, not seeing beneath the surface, never detect the cynicism which older minds find. However, it is usually only the first half of the book that appeals to children, and it is that half that is freest from intense cynicism.

It was published anonymously in October, 1726, and had an immediate success, Arbuthnot writing that it was in everybody's hands. The simple, realistic, matter-of-fact manner in which the story was told led some to believe that the author was endeavoring to give an account of what had really occurred. Swift enjoyed telling of an Irish bishop who believed the book was full of improbable lies, and that for his part he hardly believed one word of it. Johnson said, "When you have once thought of big

*Moriarty.

men and little men, it is easy to do the rest." True as this may be, Swift was the first to think of it, and the only one who could have done what he did. The moral of the tale may be, as Thackeray calls it, "horrible, shameful, unmanly, blasphemous," but the Dean's simplicity and irony have made the *Travels* "one of the wonderful and unique books of the world's literature."

In the first part Gulliver tells us of his shipwreck in Lilliput the country in which the inhabitants are six inches high. Their self-important monarch has the rare distinction of being taller than the rest by the breadth of Gulliver's nail. His courtiers are divided into two factions, the High Heels and the Low Heels. The whole land is in excitement over the religious question "Should eggs be broken at the big end or at the little end?" One side charges the other with schism. "This, however," comments Gulliver, "is thought to be a mere strain upon the text, for the words are these, that all true believers shall break their eggs at the convenient end. And which is the convenient, seems in my humble opinion, to be left to every man's conscience, or at least in the power of the Chief Magistrate to determine." When we read of his voyage to Lilliput, we exclaim, How trivial many of our human distinctions must appear to the eye of superior intelligence!

In the second part Gulliver takes a voyage to Brobdingnag. Here the men are sixty feet high. He is a pigmy among giants. After questioning Gulliver about the people from whom he came, the king of the Brobdingnagians reaches the conclusion that the bulk of Gulliver's compatriots must be "the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth."

The third book takes us into Laputa, where philosophers and visionary inventors push their absurdities to the extreme, deceiving and defrauding the simple-minded public. In the Island of Sorcerers Gulliver was able to call up the great men of antiquity; from them he learns that the men of the past whom the world now honors were at heart cowards, fools, sycophants, and atheists. He becomes acquainted with the *Struldbrugs,* or immortals,

In the whole land there were about eleven hundred who by chance are born immortal. At first he cries out, "Happy nation, where every child has at least a chance for being immortal!" But he soon learns that immortality is a calamity, for the Struldbrugs "were the most mortifying sight I ever beheld; and the women more horrible than the men."

In the fourth part the satire becomes most bitter. He is now in the land of the Houyhnhnms, where horses have the superior intelligence, and the Yahoos, brutes with the shape of men, are bestial in morals and manners. Gulliver has some difficulty in explaining to the Houyhnhnms that he is not a Yahoo. The Houyhnhnms are so governed by the highest reason that Gulliver surprises them when he relates some of the customs of his own native land. War is inexplicable.

"Difference in opinions hath cost many millions of lives; for instance, whether flesh be bread, or bread be flesh; whether the juice of a certain berry be blood or wine;* whether whistling be a vice or a virtue;† whether it be better to kiss a post or throw it into the fire;‡ what is the best color for a coat, whether black, white, red, or gray;§ and whether it should be long or short, narrow or wide, dirty or clean, with many more. Neither are any wars so furious and bloody, or of so long continuance, as those occasioned by differences in opinion, especially if it be in things indifferent."

Other Writings.—Swift was a prolific pamphleteer. Chief among the publications of this character was the series called the *Drapier's Letters,* appearing in 1724. William Wood, an English merchant, had received the privilege of coining half-pence for the Irish people, who were greatly in need of small change. Thereupon Swift wrote a "letter to the shopkeepers, tradesmen, farmers, and the common people of Ireland concerning the brass half-pence coined by Mr. Wood," and signed it M. B. Drapier. He insisted that ruin was inevitable if the Irish had to use this

* An allusion to the doctrine of transubstantiation.
† Alluding to music in churches.
‡ The cross.
§ Vestments in churches.

coin, which was deficient in value and weight. When an official report from Sir Isaac Newton declared that the coins were correct in value and weight, Swift wrote another letter urging the people not to submit to being made the victim of Wood's avarice. "It is no loss of honor to submit to the lion," wrote Swift, "but who with the figure of a man, can think with patience of being devoured alive by a rat?" A third letter asks, "Am I a free man in England and do I become a slave in six hours by crossing the Channel?" Another letter, addressed to the whole people of Ireland, aroused the Irish feeling for national independence. The coinage of Wood's half-pence ceased. Ireland felt it had a powerful advocate in the Dean of St. Patrick. Cities presented Swift with the freedom of the city, and bonfires were lit in his honor. Swift was the most popular man in Ireland.

About 1729 appeared that most bitter and ironic *A Modest Proposal for preventing the children of poor people from being a burden to their parents or the country, and for making them beneficial to the public.* The simple remedy was to take the children of the poor and sell them as food to the rich. Thus there would be more food and fewer mouths to feed. Such a remedy was, of course, to apply only to Ireland, "and for no other that ever was, is, or, I think, ever can be upon earth." There are many who condemn the satire of this *Proposal* as too revolting, but we can forgive the ferocity when we understand that Swift is here giving "the most complete expression of burning indignation against intolerable wrongs."

We can but name the titles of a few of the many other pamphlets dealing with religious and literary topics. About 1709 he wrote *Hints towards an Essay on Conversation;* after his death was published *Directions to Servants,* ironic and coarse; in 1708 he wrote *An Argument against Abolishing Christianity,* an ironic masterpiece whose moral was that we should improve our Christianity; in 1712 he published a *Proposal for correcting, improving, and ascertaining the English Tongue;* and in 1721 *A Letter of Advice to a young Poet.*

Last Years. — Swift always resented that he was compelled to

live in Ireland, a place which he compared to a coal-pit, and at another time he said it was a "place good enough to die in." After Stella's death in 1728 he became sour and misanthropic. As the years went on he lost his health, although he looked after the duties of his office as dean with ability and persistency. Although charged with avarice, he did a number of generous deeds. It may be kindly inferred that he was parsimonious in order to be generous.

His giddiness and deafness increased, and his melancholy verged on insanity. In 1740 he wrote to his cousin, Mrs. Whiteway:

> "I have been very miserable all night, and today extremely deaf and full of pain. I am so stupid and confounded that I cannot express the mortification I am under both in body and mind. All I can say is, that I am not in torture: but I daily and hourly expect it. I hardly understand one word I write. I am sure my days will be very few, few and miserable they must be."

In 1742 guardians were appointed to take care of him, owing to the dementia that afflicted him. He died on October 7, 1745, and was buried at St. Patrick's by the side of Stella. He left his fortune, ultimately amounting to about $50,000, for the founding of a hospital for the insane. In the epitaph written by himself occur these lines, which suggest themselves when we think of Swift:

> "Ubi saeva indignatio
> Cor ulterius lacerare nequit."

As a Writer. — Swift is not to be enrolled among the few greatest writers in English literature. He has the great merit of clearness; there is no doubt as to his meaning. Vigorous, idiomatic, precise, and clear — these are the adjectives that describe his style. But more than vigor and clearness are needed to produce the perfect style, if there be such a quality as perfection in style. We ask for warmth, fervor, and beauty; for delicacy and lightness of sentiment; for the genial sunshine and freshness of atmosphere that pervade the writings of sensitive

and large-souled men. But these qualities are wanting in the writings of Swift because they were wanting in Swift the man.

Swift is greatest as a satirist. He wrote poetry as well as prose, but the greatest satiric poetry cannot rank with the greatest poetry that inspires us with love for man and God. So, too it may be said of prose that clearness and order and logic are admirable qualities; but to these should be added lofty ideals the prophetic vision that kindles hope, and the loving sympathy that pities our frail humanity. It is because Swift is lacking in these latter qualities that he cannot be placed by the side of Milton and Wordsworth, of Chaucer and Carlyle.

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CHAPTER VII

Pope

POPE, the foremost representative of the English school of classic poetry, in his own time was considered by many the greatest of English poets. That he ranks today much lower in the scale is due to the change of opinion as to what good poetry is. From Beowulf to Shakspere the natural development of English poetry had been through the expression of the vigorous life of the people. From such a people with its racial characteristics one would expect a literature imaginative, serious, mystic, and vital; in form it would be impressive with the dignity of Gothic massiveness rather than splendid with the regularity of classic proportion. But in Pope's time a foreign influence, the pseudo-classicism of the French school of Boileau, had deflected the natural development of English literature. Had the French admirers of the Latin and Greek classics been able to catch the large and generous spirit of the ancient classic writers, the results would have been far more beneficial to French literature. But it is an unfortunate habit of imitators to copy the least profitable characteristics and qualities; it is so easy to copy externals, tricks, and mannerisms, and so hard to comprehend the inner sources of power. The psuedo-classicism of the French and English school of literature is as remote from the magnificent art of the great Greek classics as a French salon is from the Vale of Tempe.

To be correct, to give the final polish to an old thought, to take Nature and dress it to advantage — this was the highest art; to be vigorous, to express feeling, to love and hate passionately, to let the poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven — this was ridiculous and crude. To take the wings of the morning and fly to the uttermost parts

of the world of thought and emotion, as did Shakspere, is, perhaps, well; but how much more proper to take the thoughts of Horace or Bolingbroke and dress them in the exquisite perfection of an heroic couplet! Such was the age of Pope — the era of common sense and reason.

Parentage and Childhood. — Alexander Pope was born on May 21, 1688, the year of the Revolution — the *annus mirabilis* in which by the flight of one king and the arrival of another a new political era was inaugurated. His father was a linen merchant whose second wife had been Edith Turner, the daughter of a Yorkshire landowner whose children numbered seventeen. In later years the famous poet spoke of his family as having descended from the Earle of Downe, but he is the only authority for this statement. "The truth is that the poet's parents were a plain, honest, middle-class couple, gifted with plenty of common sense, and still more uncommon tact." After the father had accumulated a small fortune, he bought a house and about twenty acres of land at Binfield, a village on the edge of Windsor Forest. Here he lived on his income of about four hundred pounds a year, taking an interest in gardening and achieving some local reputation for the superior quality of his artichokes. His son has described his father's character in these lines —

> "Stranger to civil and religious rage,
> The good man walked innoxious through his age.
> No courts he saw, no suits would ever try,
> Nor dared an oath, nor hazarded a lie.
> Unlearned, he knew no schoolman's subtle art,
> No language but the language of the heart.
> By nature honest, by experience wise,
> Healthy by temperance and by exercise."

The mother seems also to have been a woman of very good sense, managing to keep on good terms with her son's varied friends.

Although both father and mother lived to an old age, they were not vigorously healthy people, the father having a slight curvature of the spine and the mother subject to severe nervous headaches. Pope himself physically was a weakling —

small, lean, so crooked as to be called an interrogation point, so weak that he had to be corseted and sewn up in flannels. But this was in later life. As a child, his half-sister tells us, he was a pretty, healthy boy with a rosy face and a docile temper.

Education. — Pope's family were devout Catholics, and as such were unjustly discriminated against by the schools and laws of that time. As a Catholic could not enter the best schools, we find Pope receiving a desultory home education. He never had that disciplinary training which the prescribed studies of a college curriculum give; or at least are supposed to give. On the other hand, he escaped the deadening influences of bad teaching and uninteresting subjects. He read widely and abundantly. From twelve to seventeen he read omnivorously; at fifteen he persuaded his parents, who usually granted him what he desired, to allow him to go to London to learn French and Italian. Although it is said he mastered these languages in the few months he was in London, we know that is a polite exaggeration. Voltaire later said, "Pope, with whom I was intimately acquainted, could hardly read French and spoke not one syllable of our language."

By the time he was seventeen his devotion to learning and his total disregard of the laws of hygienic living had brought on the nervous breakdown to which his heredity disposed him. With the vanity so characteristic of his nature, he enjoyed giving a melancholy farewell to all his friends, for he expected to die. But the sensible family priest insisted that a good physician be consulted. "Study less and ride out every day," was the laconic prescription given by the physician, proving that in spite of the universal custom of those days of curing all ills by blistering and bleeding, there were physicians of good sense.

Early Friends. — Near Binfield lived Mr. Lister Blount, whose two daughters, Teresa and Martha, play a long and prominent part in the life of Pope. Sir W. Trumbull, a retired diplomat, was a friend of the Popes, pleasing the father by praising the artichokes, and the son by riding with him and talking literature; he encouraged the boy to follow in the steps of Milton. From

him Pope also received the suggestion about translating Homer. Another friend was William Walsh, the "knowing Walsh," as Pope calls him, a gentleman of fortune and a critic highly praised by Dryden. He it was who gave the youthful poet a bit of advice that made a lifelong impression. We have had great poets, "but never one great poet that was correct." To be a correct poet became the aim of Pope's effort.

Two other friends who had a great influence on Pope's early life were Cromwell, a distant relative of the great Protector, and Wycherley, the dramatist, wit, and courtier. Cromwell, thirty years older than Pope, with some reputation as a wit and beau, helped to introduce the youthful aspirant for literary honor into the society of celebrities. Wycherley was more than a gay man of town: he had written plays of some fame in an age when vulgarity was no bar to popularity. He was fifty years older than Pope, his last play, *The Plain Dealer,* having appeared eleven years before Pope's birth. There is no question but that at first Pope was flattered by the acquaintanceship of these men. It is unfortunate that his hero-worship was not more worthily bestowed.

Will's Coffeehouse was the literary center of London at that time, and there Pope frequently went, hoping to meet celebrities. At length in a slight way he made acquaintance with Addison and Steele. Swift visited London in 1705 and 1707, but he is not mentioned in the early letters of Pope.

The Three Groups.— Pope is preeminently a literary man. The story of his life is the story of his writings. These easily fall into three periods: 1. *The Pastorals, Windsor Forest, Essay on Criticism, The Rape of the Lock;* 2. *The Translation of Homer;* 3. The *Essay on Man, The Dunciad,* and moral and satiric epistles. These are not the titles of all his writings, but only the principal ones in each group.

The Pastorals.— Pope made his formal introduction to the literary world in May, 1709, through the medium of Jacob Tonson's *Sixth Miscellany,* a collection of poems including work by Rowe, Garth, and pastorals by Ambrose Philips. These "mis-

cellanies" appeared from time to time, having somewhat of the function of a modern magazine in bringing current literature before the public. The *Pastorals* were written in 1704, and before publication had been handed about in manuscript among admiring acquaintances.

Tonson was a man of some note; having served as Dryden's publisher; consequently the young Pope must have been highly flattered when he received a letter written on April 20, 1706, by Tonson,

> "I have lately seen a pastoral of yours in Mr. Walsh's and Mr. Congreve's hands, which is extremely fine, and is generally approved by the best judges in poetry. I remember I have formerly seen you at my shop, and am sorry I did not improve my acquaintance with you. If you design your poem for the press, no person shall be more careful in printing of it, nor no one can give a greater encouragement to it."

Between this offer and the final publication, Pope busied himself in making translations from Ovid and Statius, and in paraphrasing one or two of the *Canterbury Tales*. Occasionally he visited London, cultivating the acquaintanceship of the wits and rakes. Pope was not given to dissipation, but he liked to be known as a man of the world, and sometimes lived a life that must have had a very injurious effect upon what Wycherley called his "little, crazy, tender carcass."

To the modern reader it is hard to understand why the *Pastorals* were so highly praised by the reading public of two hundred and more years ago. Under the captions of Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter, we find the customary characteristics of the greater part of English pastoral poetry, a dearth of genuine feeling and a mixture of Greek and English names and ideas. As in early American poetry the English nightingale chanted from the depths of the American forest, so in the artificial pastoral poetry of the eighteenth century Greek gods and goddesses, satyrs, dryads, and milk-white bulls disported themselves in the Berkshire hills. A city roof-garden decorated with a few artificial ferns and palms bears about the same relation to nature that Pope's *Pastorals* do to country life. The old assump-

tion, that pastoral poetry is the natural expression of the idyllic life of shepherds who, while tending their sheep, sit on rocks and pipe love ditties to blue-eyed innocence, has about as much truth in it as the modern theory that three acres of land spell liberty and prosperity for the possessor. The joys of country life are sung by the jaded denizens of the crowded city. The dweller in the country is usually too busy doing the chores to write poems. In modern times, however, the poet of pastoral pleasures does spend some time in the country with his eye on the object; in Pope's time he went to the library and searched his Vergil and Theocritus.

Essay on Criticism. — This poem of 744 lines, completed probably in 1709, and published anonymously in 1711, was considered a masterpiece by the critics of the eighteenth century, Dr. Johnson declaring that it contained "every mode of excellence that can embellish or dignify didactic composition." The same enthusiastic critic considered the simile in this passage the finest in the language:

> "A *little learning* is a dangerous thing;
> Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:
> There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
> And drinking largely sobers us again.
> Fir'd at first sight with what the Muse imparts,
> In fearless youth we tempt the heights of Arts,
> While from the bounded level of our mind
> Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind;
> But more advanc'd, behold with strange surprise
> New distant scenes of endless science rise!
> So pleas'd at first the tow'ring Alps we try,
> Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky,
> Th' eternal snows appear already past,
> And the first clouds and mountains seem the last;
> But, those attain'd, we tremble to survey
> The growing labors of the lengthen'd way,
> Th' increasing prospects tire our wand'ring eyes,
> Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!"

A nineteenth-century critic, De Quincey, went to the other extreme, calling the *Essay* "a mere versification, like a metrical

multiplication table, of commonplaces the most mouldy with which criticism has baited its rattraps."

Why is there such diversity of opinion? The answer is that the standard of the eighteenth century is not the standard of the nineteenth. To be fair to Pope we must seek to discover what he tried to do, what were his ideals. He was not an original observer, nor a profound thinker, nor a passionate reader of the heart of man. Imagination, mysticism, passion — these are terms that had no charm for Pope, nor for the age in which he lived. These lines in the *Essay* express his thought and his ideal:

> "True Wit is Nature to advantage dress'd,
> What oft was thought, but ne'er so well express'd."

Nature is something too coarse and burly to appear in good society; to be original is impossible, therefore take old thoughts and shape them into unforgetable phrases. The eighteenth century was the age of the deification of Wit and Good Sense; an age in which philosophers like Hobbes and Locke extolled the supremacy of the understanding, when theologians like Tillotson preached the Gospel of Commonsense, and when Shakspere would have been placed among the great poets had he conformed to the canons of Aristotle. Knowing the eighteenth century, one is not surprised to learn that the epigrammatic terseness and the polished platitudes of the *Essay on Criticism* soon made Pope the most quoted poet in England. Couplets like these could not easily be forgotten:

> "'Tis with our judgments as our watches, none
> Go just alike, yet each believes his own."

> "Some have at first for wits, then poets passed,
> Turned critics next, and proved plain fools at last."

The Rape of the Lock. — Merely mentioning *Windsor Forest, Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady,* and *Eloisa to Abelard,* we come to *The Rape of the Lock,* published in 1714, of which a judicious critic writes, "No more brilliant, sparkling, vivacious trifle is to be found in our literature." It is generally

conceded to be the best specimen of the mock-heroic in our lan guage. The poet has taken a trivial incident, the stealing by Lord Petre of a lock of hair from a Miss Fermor. This thef had caused some unpleasant feeling, and a friend of Pope's Caryl, thought Pope could reestablish good feeling by writing poem about the occurrence.

The character of the poem is well illustrated in the openin lines; Homer, Vergil, and Milton begin their great epics wit serious invocations, while Pope begins with,

> "What dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
> What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
> I sing — This verse to Caryl, Muse! is due:
> This ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view;
> Slight is the subject, but not so the praise,
> If She inspire, and He approve my lays.
> Say what strange motive, Goddess! could compel
> A well-bred Lord t' assault a gentle Belle?
> O say what stranger cause, yet unexplor'd,
> Could make a gentle Belle reject a Lord?
> In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
> And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty Rage?"

In *The Rape of the Lock* Pope found a subject especiall suited to his talents. Lacking that force and originality of th higher order of poets whose passion burns the dross from ou hearts and whose sanity gives us a wholesome interpretation o life, Pope's imitative and polish-loving mind could best displa its power in a trifle that called for wit and brilliancy. Free from the ill-natured personalities that give so much piquancy t his other satires, this poem has charmed the critics of two cen turies. Hazlitt has called it the "most exquisite specimen o filigree work ever invented. It is made of gauze and silve spangles, . . . it is the triumph of insignificance, the apotheosi of foppery and folly."

His Quarrels. — Pope was of a jealous, suspicious, and vin dictive disposition — the kind of man to whom indirection an duplicity were far more interesting than straightforwardness an truthfulness. Throughout his life he was steeped in the venor

f hate; he was never without his quarrel. This was due partly o his own temperament, partly to the character of his age. That he whole responsibility cannot be laid upon the spirit of the ge is seen in the contemporary life of the amiable Addison; that ll the responsibility cannot be laid to the personality of Pope is vident to one familiar with the bickerings and factional animosi-ies of the so-called English Augustan Age — an age which, as Mr. Ward well says, while not the most immoral, was certainly he most scandalous.

"If a man avowed himself, or caused himself to be supposed, the pponent of another, or of his coterie, or the supporter of a coterie pposed to the latter, any means of bringing his face to the grindstone vas accounted within the limits of legitimate warfare. To blacken his haracter, to blast his reputation, to defile his grandfather's grave, all hese things followed as a matter of course. . . . How unnatural in the yes of a more self-possessed posterity seems this age: when great poets nade war upon women, when no enemy was deemed too weak to be vorthy of the most practised steel."

Pope's first important literary quarrel was with Dennis, who ad written a tragedy called *Appius and Virginia*. In his *Essay n Criticism* Pope wrote —

"But Appius reddens at each word you speak,
And stares, tremendous, with a threatening eye,
Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry."

his called forth a bitter pamphlet from Dennis, in which he alled Pope a hypocrite, a hunch-backed toad, a monkey with a nind as misshapen as his body was deformed. Such were the entle amenities, such was the noble art of criticism, in the olished Augustan Age!

Of all Pope's early literary quarrels, to us the most interesting that with Addison; not because there is any substance or dig-ity to the quarrel, but because of its connection with the gifted uthor of the *De Coverley Papers*. Without going into detail oncerning the quarrel, we may say that the one impression that bides is that Addison's urbanity affords a striking contrast to he peevishness of Pope. The following passage against Addi-

son, taken from *The Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot,* is one of the bes examples of Pope's satire:

> "Peace to all such! but were there one whose fires
> True genius kindles and fair fame inspires;
> Blest with each talent and each art to please,
> And born to write, converse, and live with ease;
> Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
> Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne:
> View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
> And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
> Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
> And without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
> Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
> Just hint a fault and hesitate dislike;
> Alike reserved to blame or to commend,
> A timorous foe and a suspicious friend;
> Dreading e'vn fools, by flatterers besieged,
> And so obliging that he ne'er obliged;
> Like Cato, give his little senate laws,
> And sit attentive to his own applause:
> While wits and templars every sentence raise,
> And wonder with a foolish face of praise;
> Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
> Who would not weep, if Atticus were he?"

Translation of Homer.—For his translation of the *Iliad* an the *Odyssey,* a task covering a period of ten years, he receive the handsome sum of about £9,000, a princely reward in the ligh of the meager compensation which Pope had received for hi previous efforts. Very appropriately now might he say tha "thanks to Homer he could live and thrive, indebted to no princ or peer alive." It is certainly to the credit of Pope that so man of his friends, both titled and untitled, busied themselves s earnestly in securing many names on the advance subscriptio list. The *Iliad* eventually appeared in six volumes at a guine a volume, and the *Odyssey* in five volumes, at the same pric Lord Harley subscribed for ten sets of the *Odyssey* for himsel five sets for his wife, and one for his daughter. This mea eighty volumes of quarto size for the library, and an expenditu of four hundred dollars from a single subscriber.

Is the translation a great achievement? His contemporaries generally said "yes" to that question, and it is significant that today if one asks a bookseller for a translation of the *Iliad* he is apt to receive a copy of Pope's. But the gruff verdict of Dr. Bentley, the great Greek scholar of Pope's time, is the verdict of the critical scholars of our generation — "a very pretty poem, but not Homer." Yet a hundred years after its publication Byron cries enthusiastically, "Who will ever lay down Pope except for the original? As a child I first read Pope's *Homer* with a rapture which no subsequent work could ever afford." And Gray, Gibbon, and Johnson have been admirers of Pope's version, Johnson calling it "the noblest version of poetry the world has ever seen."

The ideal translation of Homer, like the ideal school, has not yet appeared, nor is it ever likely to appear. To reproduce a poetic version of the immortal bard requires a rare combination of scholarship and poetic genius. We have great scholars and there have been poetic geniuses, but it is too much to expect one body to be the holy temple of scholarship and poetic genius. Pope was neither a Greek scholar nor was he a poetic genius of the highest order. He had skill and taste in versification, but he was far removed from the elemental simplicity, the magnanimity, the sanity, and wholesome passion of Homer. What he did have has been well described by Mr. Leslie Stephen:

> "Pope's style, when he is at his best, has the merit of being thoroughly alive; there are no dead masses of useless verbiage; every excrescence has been carefully pruned away; . . . We have the pleasure which we receive from really polished oratory; every point is made to tell; . . . The speeches of his heroes are often admirable, full of spirit, well balanced and skilfully arranged pieces of rhetoric — not a mere inorganic series of observations."

His deficiency in Greek scholarship made his translation of Homer a tedious task. In later years he told his friend Spence:

> "In the beginning of my translating the *Iliad,* I wished anybody would hang me a hundred times. It sat so heavily on my mind at first that I often used to dream of it, and do sometimes still. When I fell

into the method of translating thirty or forty verses before I got up, ar piddled with it the rest of the morning, it went on easy enough; ar when I was thoroughly got into the way of it I did the rest with pleasure

So arduous was this work that when he later came to trans lating the *Odyssey* he called in two of his friends, Broome an Fenton, to help both in translating and in composition. Broom translated eight and Fenton four of the books, but with tha duplicity too common in his career, Pope induced the obligin Broome to sign a statement that he had done only three of th books, and that Fenton had translated but two.

When the *Iliad* was finished, Gay, the poet, wrote a very fla tering tribute to Pope, a *Welcome from Greece*, in which th poet is greeted joyously after his long sojourn in classic Hella Not all greetings were as flattering as this. His old enem Dennis was lying in wait with a criticism that was almost brut in its vehemence. He called the translation barbarous, fla obscure, and unnatural, and the translator a rhymester witho judgment, a Jesuitical pretender to truth, and a barbaro wretch.

The Dunciad.— This is a satiric poem in celebration of th dunce. As the *Iliad* is the epic of Troy, the *Aeneid* the epic o Aeneas, so the *Dunciad* is the epic of the dunces who at one tim or another have offended Pope. The first edition, appearing i May, 1728, consisted of three books or cantos; at present consists of four books with a total of 1754 lines. So bitter wa the satire that Pope, fearing the natural resentment of his vi tims, published it anonymously. The title page contained th imprint of A. Dodd, Dublin, publisher, a fictitious firm.

The *Dunciad* has the reputation of being the cleverest satir ever directed against the literary tribe of scribblers and denizer of Grub Street. To us of the present day the wit is sometime obscure and the satire coarse. Lowell goes so far as to sa "It is filthy even in a filthy age, and Swift himself could n have gone beyond some parts of it. One's mind needs to b sprinkled with some disinfecting fluid after reading it." Th second book is most offensive, the fourth is considered the bes

It is significant that Swift was visiting Pope while he wrote parts of this satire. While it is to be regretted that Pope used his great talents to impale his insignificant victims upon the envenomed spear of his wit, it is undoubtedly true that he had great provocation. We are familiar with his thrusts and cuts, but forget that his enemies had lashed him unmercifully, not sparing to taunt him with his bodily infirmities. Over-refinement was not the weakness of an age that amused itself by applying these nicknames upon the frail poet — "An Ape," "Poet Bug," "The Wasp of Twickenham."

An Essay on Man. — This poem, pronounced by Voltaire the most useful and sublime didactic poem ever written in any language, consists of four parts or epistles, making a total of 1304 lines. The first epistle was published anonymously in 1733. Originally Pope had planned to write a comprehensive series of which the *Essay on Man* was to be the first part, the other parts treating of Knowledge and its limits, of Government, and the final work of the eight or nine branches of Morality.

As the *Dunciad* shows the influence of Swift, so the *Essay on Man* shows that of Lord Bolingbroke, to whom the *Essay* is dedicated.

Bolingbroke had been a prominent politician and man of great social influence, but had been exiled. Upon his return he had settled near Uxbridge, where he indulged his taste for philosophy. Here he was frequently visited by Pope, who was dazzled by the brilliant but superficial thought of this distinguished man.

In a letter to Swift of August, 1731, Bolingbroke writes, "Does Pope talk to you of the noble work which, at my instigation, he has begun in such a manner that he must be convinced by this time I judged better of his talents than he did?" He then gives an outline of the four parts, three of which had already been written.

The first epistle treats of the nature and state of man with respect to the universe. Man is finite, his knowledge imperfect, like the beast he is most fortunate when ignorant of the future.

"The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed today,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
Pleased to the last, he crops the flowery food,
And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood."

The second epistle discusses the nature and state of man with respect to himself as an individual. It begins with the familiar

"Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of mankind is man."

The third treats of the nature and state of man with respect to society, and the last discusses the nature and state of man with respect to happiness. He concludes that "Virtue alone is happiness below."

Pope was not an original thinker, nor was his mind of that order which can absorb the thoughts of others and construct them into a unified comprehensive system. The thoughts in the *Essay on Man,* like those in the earlier *Essay on Criticism,* have been culled from the writings of others. In addition to the personal influence of Bolingbroke, Pope was indebted to the *Characteristics* of Shaftesbury, the *Origin of Evil* of King, and the *Essays* of Leibnitz. Pope was not great enough to digest these ideas and then reproduce them in a unified philosophy of his own. Consequently the chief merit of the poem consists in the exquisite art with which he has given finality of expression to common ideas.

The following well known lines are found in this *Essay:*

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body nature is, and God the soul."

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace."

"Honor and shame from no Condition rise;
Act well your part, there all the honor lies."

"Worth makes the man, and want of it, the fellow;
The rest is all but leather or prunella."

"Order is Heaven's first law."

"What's fame? a fancy'd life in others' breath."

Epistles and Satires. — Pope has written a number of poetic epistles and satires, many of which are in imitation of Horace. In this kind of composition Pope is at his best. Of the many writings of this class we shall select for our notice but two, *The Epistle to Arbuthnot,* and the second epistle in the *Moral Essays, Of the Characters of Women.*

The Epistle to Arbuthnot, a poem of 419 lines first published in 1735, should be read by every student of Pope, for it is not only a brilliant piece of satire, but it is more autobiographical than any other of his poems. It opens with an invective against the poetasters who come to him with their doggerel, asking for advice and corrections,

"Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
They rave, recite, and madden round the land.
What walls can guard me, or what shades can hide?
They pierce my thicket, thro' my Grot they glide.
. . . . . .
No place is sacred, not the church is free;
Ev'n Sunday shines no Sabbath-day to me."

After defending himself against the charge of cruelty by saying, "No creature smarts so little as a fool," he gives us this bit of autobiography:

"Why did I write? What sin, to me unknown,
Dipped me in ink, my parents' or my own?
As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.
I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father disobeyed;
The muse but served to ease some friend, not wife,
To help me through this long disease, my life."

After the famous satire on Addison, already quoted, appear the lines on Bubo, said to be Lord Halifax. Then we have another touch of autobiography:

"Oh, let me live my own, and die so too!
(To live and die is all I have to do)
Maintain a poet's dignity and ease,
And see what friends, and read what books I please;
Above a patron, though I condescend
Sometimes to call a minister my friend.
I was not born for courts or great affairs;
I pay my debts, believe, and say my prayers;
Can sleep without a poem in my head,
Nor know if Dennis be alive or dead."

Then comes the bitterest of all his satirical sketches, the one on Sporus, said to be Lord Hervey, whom Pope calls "a bug with gilded wings," "this painted child of dirt," "familiar Toad," "one vile Antithesis," and an "amphibious thing."

"Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallow streams run dimpling all the way.
. . . . . .
A Cherub's face, a reptile all the rest;
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust;
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust."

After reading such epithets it is not hard to understand why Pope was both hated and feared, as he himself tells us, by men who had no fear of God.

In this same epistle are some of the tenderest lines written by Pope. The knowledge that they were published two years after the death of his mother need not cause us to question the genuineness of his filial affection.

"Me let the tender office long engage
To rock the cradle of reposing age,
With lenient art extend a mother's breath,
Make languor smile, and smooth the bed of death,
Explore the thoughts, explain the asking eye,
And keep awhile one parent from the sky."

The Characters of Women. — This epistle appeared about a month after the one on Arbuthnot. It is generally understood that the lady to whom the epistle is addressed is Martha Blount, or Patty, the woman who plays a large part in the life and affec-

tion of Pope. Pope said in a letter to a friend that the lady had modestly insisted that her name be suppressed. In the advertisement to the first edition Pope insisted that no characters were taken from life. This may be true as the first edition did not contain the characters of Atossa, Philomede, and Chloe — assumed names to designate Sarah, the Duchess of Marlborough, Henrietta, Duchess of Marlborough, and Lady Suffolk. His characterization of Atossa has an added interest owing to the rumor that Pope had received £1000 from the Duchess of Marlborough with the understanding that the lines should be suppressed. The lines did not appear until after Pope's death. Whether the Duchess had made a compact with Pope, and whether he was guilty of base perfidy in inserting the lines, are questions that have been much discussed by the critics.

The satire begins,

> "Nothing so true as what you once let fall:
> 'Most women have no characters at all.'"

While it is to be noted that the second line is supposed to be the language of Patty Blount, yet the sentiment is approved by Pope. If women have no characters at all why write a long satire on the characters of women? Atossa is depicted as one who

> "Shines in exposing knaves and painting fools,
> Yet is whatever she hates and ridicules.
> . . . without one distress,
> Sick of herself through very selfishness!"

The conclusion of the satire contains a fine tribute to Patty, but not a high conception of womankind, for

> "Woman's at best a contradiction still."

Bolingbroke and Johnson considered this the finest of his satires, but modern critics, with the memory of the noble conceptions of woman from the great souls of Spenser, Shakspere, Tennyson, and Browning, deny Pope's power to portray the characters of women. We are ready to agree with De Quincey's verdict —

"There is no truth in Pope's satiric sketches of women — not even colorable truth; but if there were, how frivolous, how hollow, to erect into solemn monumental protestations against the whole feminine sex, what turns out to be pure casual eccentricities, or else personal idiosyncrasies, or else foibles shockingly exaggerated!"

His Death. — Pope died on May 30, 1744, aged fifty-six years and nine days. During the last six years of his life his literary work consisted of writing the fourth book of the *Dunciad,* and in making alterations and additions to what he had already written. Never very strong, it is remarkable that he lived as long as he did. His best friends, Bolingbroke, Patty Blount, and Spence, were with him during the last days of his life. Various anecdotes have come to us of these last days. Warburton had issued a new edition of Pope's *Moral Epistles.* In sending copies to some of his friends Pope said, "Here am I, like Socrates, distributing my morality among my friends, just as I am dying." He was buried in a vault in Twickenham church, near the monument which he had erected to his parents.

Characteristics As a Man.—One's feeling toward Pope is apt to be a mingling of admiration and contempt, admiration for his ability and contempt for his lack of manliness. His devotion to his art, his perseverance, his surmounting the obstacles of ill health and an insignificant body, his love for his parents — these are qualities that make one wish he could forget his vanity, his subterfuge, his hypocrisy, and vindictiveness. Let it be placed to his credit that in an age when it was fashionable to crook the knee before royalty Pope preserved his independence; that at a time when men changed their religion to suit the fashion of the hour, Pope, while not a devout Catholic, never forswore his childhood's faith for the hope of worldly advancement; that although there are rumors that he was at times almost parsimonious, yet he has never been charged with money-madness.

Mr. Paston, a biographer, after having said that Pope was feminine in timidity and love of subterfuge, adds:

But the finer attributes of the maidenly character were his not less than the defects. He displayed great fortitude and patience under suffer-

ing. . . . He was seldom without three or four *protégés* on his hands, whom he helped liberally, not only with money, but with time, interest and trouble. . . . A downright verbal lie he rarely told, but he equivocated pretty genteely, while leaving some loophole out of which to creep when directly taxed with falsehood. This tendency towards evasion and sophistry certainly grew upon him, but he was to the last a most careless, clumsy liar.

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CHAPTER VIII

Samuel Johnson

THE personality of Dr. Samuel Johnson is far more interesting than the product of his pen. Rude and rough in speech, coarse in manners, untidy in person, and governed often by his prejudices, he was nevertheless a man of the kindest heart and the most vigorous intellect. He was not great as an original thinker nor could he appreciate the higher forms of originality in others, but his influence on English literature was as wholesome as it was imperious. Without the gift of the inspired seer who reveals to his generation the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, he had the useful gift of a sturdy commonsense fortified by learning and sweetened by a childlike faith in a revealed religion. He hated the artificiality of the eighteenth century, and was a living protest against sham. "His morality," thinks Hawthorne, "was as English an article as a beefsteak." And Jowett has said, "Of all men of genius he is the only typical Englishman in whose strength, as also in his weakness, we see the national character." We like Johnson, not because he is so thoroughly British, but because he is so thoroughly human. We can feel sympathy with his resolutions to overcome his indolence, to go to church, to eat and drink moderately, to get up early in the morning, to read the Scriptures, to reject or expel wrong thoughts. We admire him, not for his ability as poet, essayist, critic, and lexicographer, but because in spite of his long struggle with poverty and disease, with pride and hypochondria, because in spite of his self-assertiveness and his later years of supreme dictatorship in the world of letters, he remained at heart a sincere and humble man.

Early Days. — Samuel Johnson was born at Lichfield, Staffordshire, September 18, 1709. His father, a bookseller, in 1706, at the age of fifty, had married Sara Ford, a woman of thirty-

seven. Young Samuel was afflicted with scrofula, a hereditary disease commonly known as the "king's evil." When three years of age he was taken by his mother to London to be cured by the touch of the queen, who placed about his neck an "angel of gold noble," containing on one side St. Michael and on the other a ship under full sail. In later years Johnson retained "a confused, but somehow a solemn, recollection of a lady in diamonds and a long black hood." The lady was Queen Anne, whose royal touch unfortunately failed to effect a cure.

Early Education.—When a child he attended a school kept by Dame Oliver. In later years the dame declared he was the best scholar she ever had. When he was leaving Lichfield to go to Oxford she presented him with a piece of gingerbread. "This," said Johnson, "was as high a proof of merit as he could conceive." We next find him under the instruction of a master in English whom he called Tom Browne, the author of a spelling book "dedicated to the Universe"; then he attended the Lichfield Grammar School, whose master, Mr. Hunter, was a stern disciplinarian, and "an odd mixture of the pedant and the sportsman." Johnson was so impressed by the dignity and severity of the master that late in life he said he never could look upon Miss Seward, who resembled Mr. Hunter, her grandfather, without a feeling of awe. Yet he characteristically acknowledged, "My master whipped me very well. Without that, sir, I should have done nothing." Doubtless, according to the ideas of discipline at that time, Johnson needed whippings, for he was a big, clumsy boy with a natural disinclination to work. Yet because of his wonderful memory he was the best scholar in the school. With no fondness for sports, while others were on the playground he was reading omnivorously. When he was fifty-four years old, he said to Boswell, "Sir, in my early days I read very hard; it is a sad reflection but a true one that I knew almost as much at eighteen as I do now."

We next find him at Stourbridge school, under the instruction of a Mr. Wentworth, from whom he said he was able to learn much. He was here for about a year and then for two

years remained at his father's house. As his father was a bookseller whose shop contained learned works in ancient and modern languages and solemn and ponderous treatises in theology and philosophy, the boy had a splendid opportunity to browse without danger of mental dyspepsia. He himself has referred to this period of his life — "I had looked into a great many books that were not commonly known at the university. . . . so that when I came to Oxford, Dr. Adams, now master of Pembroke College, told me I was the best qualified for the university that he had ever known come there." It was during this period that Samuel on one occasion refused to accompany his father to Uttoxeter market where Michael Johnson was accustomed to sell books on market days. Many years later this act of disobedience so weighed on the conscience of Johnson that he went to Uttoxeter market and in bad weather stood for an hour bareheaded at the place where his father's stall used to be. "In contrition I stood," he said, "and I hope the penance was expiatory."

At Oxford. — On the last day of October, 1728, he entered Pembroke College, Oxford. Dr. Adams, who was a fellow of Pembroke when Johnson entered, has given an account of the first impression made by the uncouth undergraduate whose father had brought him to the university. In the conversation that ensued after the lad was introduced to Mr. Jordan, his tutor, he at first kept a respectful silence, but at length broke into the conversation with a quotation from Macrobius, a display of erudition that must have amazed the little group. Oxford in those days was not especially conducive to promoting the scholarly life. Degrees were given as a matter of course at the end of the prescribed number of terms of residence. The lectures by the tutors were not especially numerous nor were they interesting. "The one very powerful incentive to learning," Johnson wrote in one of his essays in *The Idler,* "is the genius of the place." Soon after taking up residence at Oxford, Johnson was asked to translate Pope's *Messiah* into Latin hexameters. While this translation falls short of Vergilian elegance, Pope was so generous as to declare that the "writer of this poem will leave it a

question for posterity whether his or mine is the original." There has been some controversy as to the length of Johnson's stay at Oxford. Hawkins and Boswell in their biographies said three years, and Boswell is usually correct. But in this instance he is wrong, for later evidence shows that Johnson was in actual residence but about fourteen months. His name was on the college books until October, 1731, but his residence came to an end in December, 1729.

In many respects his college life was unsatisfactory. In the words of Boswell, he was "depressed by poverty and irritated by disease." And yet a man in whom the social feeling was so large could not fail of popularity and enjoyment. In later years he loved to visit Oxford, and always enjoyed talking over his college experiences with the friends he had made there. "Sir, we are a nest of singing birds," said he of Oxford. Pembroke College remembers Johnson with affection. Today in the library is the desk once owned by Johnson. On it was written the famous *Dictionary;* and

"his rooms on the second floor, above the ancient gateway, are much the same as when he lived there. The window of the bedroom looks on the old quadrangle, and in the rooms on the floor below is an oriel window, facing north, placed by the college in honor of its former illustrious member."

Marriage.—In December, 1731, Michael Johnson, the father of Samuel, died. Samuel's inheritance amounted to but £20. "Having no money and no prospects, Johnson naturally married," wittily observes a biographer. The marriage took place at Derby, July 9, 1735. Boswell has given us an account of the wedding which he heard from Johnson himself:

"Sir, she had read the old romances, and had got into her head the fantastical notion that a woman of spirit should use her lover like a dog. So, sir, at first she told me that I rode too fast, and she could not keep up with me; and, when I rode a little slower, she passed me, and complained that I lagged behind. I was not to be made the slave of caprice; and I resolved to begin as I meant to end. I therefore pushed on briskly till I was fairly out of her sight. The road lay between two hedges, so I

was sure she could not miss it, and I contrived that she should soon com up with me; when she did, I observed her to be in tears."

The bride was Mrs. Porter, a widow in her forty-seventl year; Johnson was not quite twenty-six. Garrick described th bride as very fat, with cheeks of florid red, "produced by thicl painting, and increased by the liberal use of cordials; flaring an fantastic in her dress, and affected both in her speech and gen eral behavior." Lucy Porter, the step-daughter, told Boswel that the bridegroom in appearance

"was very forbidding; he was then lean and lanky; so that his immens structure of bone was hideously striking to the eye, and the scars o scrofula were deeply visible. He also wore his hair, which was straigh and stiff, separated behind; and he often had seemingly convulsive start and odd gesticulations, which tended to excite at once surprise an ridicule."

That the marriage of two such persons would end in unhappi ness would be the natural inference, but matrimonial bliss is no to be inferred by any of the rules of logic. In this case there i every indication that the marriage was a happy one. "This i the most sensible man I have ever met," said Mrs. Porter to he daughter when she first met the uncouth Johnson. "Sir, it wa a love match on both sides," said Johnson to his friend Beauclerk And after her death in March, 1752, he worked in a room in th attic for several years because that was the only room in which he had not seen his dear Tetty. And a year after her death he makes record, "I kept this day as the anniversary of m Tetty's death, with prayers and tears in the morning. In th evening I prayed for her conditionally, if it were lawful."

Goes to London.— His wife brought him a fortune of £800 Part of this was lost through the insolvency of an attorney With the remainder the couple set up a school at Edial, nea Lichfield. After a year and a half the school failed, for Johnso did not have the virtues of a successful schoolmaster. One o his pupils was David Garrick, a man who played a prominen part among the later London friends.

Johnson, like Shakspere and thousands of lesser literary men, rned toward London with the hope of making a living with s pen. In discussing the earnings of literary men in the ghteenth century, Sir Leslie Stephen writes:

"A few poets trod in Pope's steps. Young made more than £3000 the satires called the *Universal Passion.* . . . Gay made £1000 by his *ems;* £400 for the copyright of the *Beggar's Opera,* and three times as ich for its second part, *Polly.* Among historians, Hume seems to have ceived £700 a volume; Smollett made £2000 by his catchpenny rival blication; Henry made £3300 by his history; and Robertson, after the oksellers had made £6000 by his *History of Scotland,* sold his *Charles V.* r £4500. Amongst the novelists, Fielding received £700 for *Tom Jones* d £1000 for *Amelia;* Sterne, for the second edition of the first part of *istram Shandy* and for two additional volumes, received £650. . . . ldsmith received 60 guineas for the immortal *Vicar,* a fair price, accordg to Johnson, for a work by a then unknown author. By each of his ays he made about £500, and for the eight volumes of his *Natural istory* he received 800 guineas. Towards the end of the century, Mrs. adcliffe received £500 for the *Mysteries of Udolpho,* and £800 for her st work, the *Italian.* Perhaps the largest sum given for a single book as £6000 paid to Hawkesworth for his account of the South Sea Expedins. Horne Tooke received from £4000 to £5000 for the *Diversions of arley;* and it is added by his biographer, though it seems incredible, that ayley received no less than £11,000 for the *Life of Cowper.* This was, course, in the present century, when we are already approaching the riod of Scott and Byron."

These illustrations are sufficient to show that a man of literary ility might be able to make a living in the great Babylon of odern times, but Johnson's beginnings were as full of misery d want as those of thousands of less celebrated aspirants who ve made the name of Grub Street a synonym for poverty. f the first years in London we know very little, for even that ost persevering of biographers, Boswell, failed to get much formation on this period. Johnson himself has told us a little his manner of living:

"I dined very well for eightpence, with very good company, at the ine Apple' in New Street, just by. Several of them had travelled. ey expected to meet every day, but we did not know each other's names. used to cost the rest a shilling, for they drank wine; but I had a cut

of meat for sixpence, and bread for a penny, and gave the waiter a penn so that I was quite as well served, nay, better, than the rest, for they ga the waiter nothing."

But before his affairs grew better, they grew worse. Fro scraps of conversation with his friends in later life we gath that there were times when he walked the streets because he ha no place of lodging. Mrs. Piozzi relates that Johnson onc burst into a passion of tears as he read the lines from his ow satire telling of the "ills which assail the scholar's life," lin which brought to mind the bitter experiences of his first years i London.

Literary Beginnings. — Two years before going to London h had translated Lobo's *Abyssinia,* and in 1738, the year after h went to London, he published his *London.* But the first yea of his literary struggles in London are associated with th *Gentleman's Magazine,* a periodical conducted by Edward Cav Johnson was delighted to become a contributor to this magazine later he became a kind of under-editor. For this magazine h wrote a variety of articles, doing whatever work would brin him remuneration. From 1740 to 1743 he reported the parli mentary debates for the magazine. Owing to strict regulatio against publishing the proceedings of Parliament, the reporte speeches appeared under the title of *Debates in Magna Lilliputi* and fictitious names were given to the speakers. Sometime Johnson, having no more definite knowledge than that certai speeches had been made, wrote the speeches himself.

It is related by a Mr. Murphy

"that at a dinner party at Mr. Foote's, an important debate, towards th end of Sir Robert Walpole's administration, being mentioned, Dr. Franc observed that 'Mr. Pitt's speech on that occasion was the best he ha ever read.' He went on to say that 'he employed eight years of his li in the study of Demosthenes, and finished a translation of that celebrate orator, with all the decorations of style and language within the reach o his capacity; but had met with nothing equal to the speech above men tioned.' Many of the company remembered the debate; and some passag were cited with the approbation and applause of all present. During th ardor of conversation, Johnson remained silent. As soon as the warm

f praise subsided, he opened with these words: 'That speech I wrote in garret in Exeter Street.' The guests then began to praise the impar- iality with which reason and eloquence had been equally dealt out to both arties. But Johnson would not agree to this. 'I saved,' he said, appearances tolerably well, but I took care that the *Whig dogs* should ot have the best of it.'"

Another incident belonging to this period illustrates both the ariety of work he was willing to undertake and his sturdy ndependence of character. Osborne, a well-known bookseller, ad purchased the library of Lord Oxford, and had employed ohnson to assist in making a catalogue. While at this work a ontroversy arose which ended in Johnson's knocking down the ookseller with one of the heavy folios. When in later years Mrs. Thrale asked him about this quarrel, he replied, "There is othing to tell, dearest lady, but that he was insolent and I beat im, and that he was a blockhead and told of it, which I should ever have done. . . . I have beat many a fellow, but the rest ad the wit to hold their tongues." To Boswell he said, "Sir, e was impertinent to me and I beat him. But it was not in his hop; it was in my own chamber."

Irene and London.—Before he had migrated to London he ad written the greater part of *Irene,* a tragedy in five acts. But t was not acted until February, 1749, when it appeared under he title of *Mahomet and Irene.* Elaborate preparations were nade to insure its success, and Garrick and Barry, the best actors f the time, took part in the performance, but in spite of all the ragedy failed. Yet it was not a complete failure for the author eceived from copyright and "author's night" nearly £300. The etting of the play is oriental. Mahomet, the Emperor of the Turks, is in love with Irene, a Greek slave, who spurns his ttentions. While Mahomet is making love, Cali, the Grand Vizier, is conspiring against the sovereign. Upon being caught n his treachery he falsely accuses Irene as a conspirator. Just fter she has consented to become the wife of the monarch, she is ed away to be strangled. Too late the Sultan discovers that he as been duped.

London is a poem written in imitation of the third satire o Juvenal. It appeared in 1738 and attracted the attention of Pop who praised it. Goldsmith in 1767 wrote that "This poem o Mr. Johnson's is the best imitation of the original that ha appeared in our language, being possessed of all the force an satirical resentment of Juvenal." This is higher praise than th poem deserves. Johnson was too immature at that time to kno his London as Juvenal knew his Rome. The sentiments of th poem are the conventional belief that the government is vena and the great are weakened by luxury; the simple life of th country is contrasted with the enervating profligacy of the city In this poem occur these lines—

> "Of all the griefs that harass the distress'd,
> Sure the most bitter is a scornful jest;
> Fate never wounds more deep the generous heart,
> Than when a blockhead's insult points the dart."

The satire was published anonymously by Dodsley and brough the author ten guineas and some honor.

The English Dictionary.—In 1747, upon the urgent reques of a syndicate of booksellers, Johnson began the stupendous tas of making a complete English dictionary. For this work he wa to receive £1575; it may be added that by the time the work wa finished he had received in scattered payments £100 in excess o the original agreement. At first he expected to finish his task i three years, but it was not until April 15, 1755, that the tw large folio volumes were issued for general circulation. Th price was £4 4s. It was popular from the first and ran throug many editions.

While modern dictionary-making, demanding the employmen of hundreds of specialists in science and art, in literature an philology, and the expenditure of a million of dollars, results in fulness and accuracy of information unknown in the eighteent century, yet Johnson's accomplishment is not to be minimize Johnson was no etymologist, although he had the usual equip ment of one educated in the classics. But of Teutonic philolog he was ignorant; so it is not surprising that in 1807 Noa

Webster wrote, "I can assure the American public that the errors in Johnson's *Dictionary* are ten times as numerous as they suppose; and that the confidence now reposed in its accuracy is the greatest injury to philology that now exists." It is also true that he permitted his prejudices to color his definitions, as when he defined *oats* as "a grain which in England is given to horses, but in Scotland supports the people." A definition which led to the bright retort of Lord Elibank, who on hearing of Johnson's definition said, "Yes; and where else will you see *such* horses and *such* men." It is also true that some of his definitions have a Johnsonian ponderosity, as that of *Network,* "anything reticulated or decussated at equal interstices between the intersections." These are but minor defects that but add piquancy to the work which involved an enormous amount of drudgery. At times he had as many as six amanuenses to assist him, but the responsibility and the credit of completing the task were his alone. To a man naturally indolent, as was Johnson, the patient application, the labor of correction, and the vexatious delays must have been intensely distasteful. There is both humor and pathos in his definition of the word *Lexicographer,* "a harmless drudge, that busies himself in tracing the original and detailing the signification of words." Perhaps the finest quality in the *Dictionary* is the fulness of the quotations illustrating the meanings of the words. On the whole, the making of the *Dictionary* was a great achievement and we may say of it, in the words of Carlyle, "There is in it a kind of architectural nobleness; it stands there like a great solid square-built edifice, finished, symmetrically complete: you judge that a true builder did it."

When planning the *Dictionary* he had addressed Lord Chesterfield, probably with the expectation that the distinguished nobleman would act as generous patron. Chesterfield, neglecting to assist while Johnson was struggling with his task, publicly praised him when the work was finished, possibly with the hope that the *Dictionary* would appear with his name as the patron. "He had," said Johnson, "for many years taken no notice of me, but when my *Dictionary* was coming out, he fell a-scribbling

in *The World* about it. Upon which I wrote him a letter. . . ." In this celebrated letter, which Professor Gummere aptly calls "a kind of declaration of independence in English authorship," occurs this paragraph:

> "Seven years, my lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it at last to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favor. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before. . . . Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encumbers him with help?"

The Rambler and the Idler.—The first number of the *Rambler* was published on March 20, 1750, and thereafter on each Tuesday and Saturday during the next two years this periodical appeared. With four or five exceptions, Johnson was the author of all the numbers. As he was at work on the *Dictionary* during these years, one must conclude that Johnson must have attained mastery over his natural disposition to indolence. The essays, lacking the humor and pathos of Lamb's and without the genial social atmosphere of Addison's, are tiresome. But this was not the opinion of his famous contemporary, Samuel Richardson, who wrote, "I am inexpressibly pleased with them." Coleridge in his *Table Talk* expresses the modern estimate, "It would not be easy to name a book more tiresome, indeed, more difficult to read, or one which gives moral lessons, in a more frigid tone . . . in a language more heavy and monotonous."

The *Idler* consisted of a series of essays contributed to a weekly paper from 1758-1760. The essays are lighter in tone than those of the *Rambler,* but the quality is such that they have added but little to the reputation of the author. In the forty-first number he gives an account of the death of his mother, who died in her ninetieth year.

Rasselas.—This oriental story was written, as is well known, to defray the funeral expenses of his mother. It was published

n April 19, 1759. Composed on the evenings of a single week, t is nevertheless the most popular of all his writings. For the irst edition he received £100, for a second £25. *Rasselas* has often been compared to Voltaire's *Candide,* which appeared about he same time, but the resemblances are superficial. In *Candide* Voltaire attacks religion, and ridicules the most sacred affections; n *Rasselas* we are impressed by the universality of death and ereavement. "Johnson meant," writes Boswell, "by showing he unsatisfactory nature of things temporal, to direct the hopes f man to things eternal."

Lives of the Poets.—Although Elizabeth Barrett Browning vittily said that Johnson "wrote the lives of the poets and left ut the poets," this work is the best of all his literary productions. Before discussing this work, four volumes of which were published in 1779, and six more in 1781, we must merely mention he *Vanity of Human Wishes,* a poem published in 1749; an dition of Shakspere, 1765; *Taxation No Tyranny,* 1775, a weak efence of England's policy towards the American colonies; *ourney to the Western Islands,* 1775; and *Political Tracts,* 1776.

The *Lives of the Poets* contains both criticism and biography, vith a preponderance of criticism. The majority of Johnson's oets have, like the lovers in *St. Agnes Eve,* disappeared, "ay, ges long ago," and only the specialist in literature knows anyning of poets like Pomfret, Stepney, Duke, Sprat, Fenton, Yalden, Mallett, and Tickell. Among the fifty-two lives the only nen who today rank high are Milton, Dryden, Addison, Swift, Pope, and Gray. Shakspere is probably omitted because he had een discussed in the preface to Johnson's edition of Shakspere. The following passages from the life of Milton are illustrations f his independence of judgment as well as of his lack of appreiation of what we now consider the high-water mark of poetic xcellence.

Of *Lycidas* he writes:

"In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth; there is no rt, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral; easy, vulgar, nd therefore disgusting; whatever images it can supply are long ago

exhausted; and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction o the mind."

Of *Paradise Lost* he writes at times very sympathetically:

"Whatever be the faults of his diction, he can not want the praise o copiousness and variety: he was master of his language in its full extent and has selected the melodious words with such diligence, that from hi book alone the art of English poetry might be learned. . . . I can no wish his work to be other than it is. . . . But of all the borrowers fro Homer, Milton is perhaps the least indebted. He was naturally a thinke for himself, confident of his own abilities, and disdainful of help o hinderance."

W. E. Channing thought that Johnson could not appreciat Milton because the natures of the two were different. "It wa customary," he writes, "in the day of Johnson's glory, to cal him a giant, to class him with a mighty but still an earth-bor race. Milton we should rank among seraphs." In his criticism of Dryden and Pope, men with whose intellectual natures hi own was in sympathy, he is at his best. On the whole, the *Live of the Poets,* in spite of many defects due to lack of carefu investigation and to the more serious inability to appreciate th finer qualities of poetry, is a worthy contribution to the histor of English literature.

His Pension. — In discussing his writings we have passed b some of the important events of his life. In 1762 a pension o £300 a year was granted to Johnson by Lord Bute, the ministe under George III. "It is not given to you for what you are t do, but for what you have done," was the comforting remark o the royal minister to the lexicographer who had defined a *pensio* as "An allowance made to any one without an equivalent. I England it is generally understood to mean pay given to a stat hireling for treason to his country"; and *pensioner* as "A slav of state hired by a stipend to obey his master." In his letter o acceptance he wrote to Lord Bute:

"You have conferred your favors on a man who has neither allianc nor interest, who has not merited them by services, nor courted them b

officiousness; you have spared him the shame of solicitation, and the anxiety of suspense."

When he heard of the criticism of his enemies, he laughingly commented, "I wish that my pension were twice as large, that they might make twice as much noise." And at another time:

"It is true I cannot now curse the House of Hanover, nor would it be decent for me to drink King James's health in the wine that King George gives me to pay for. But, sir, I think that the pleasure of cursing the House of Hanover, and drinking King James's health, are amply compensated for by three hundred pounds a year."

The pension may have accentuated a proneness to indolence, but it also relieved Johnson from the pressure of poverty and enabled him to indulge his propensity to bestow alms on all who needed his aid. He also could now "fold his legs and have his talk out," an occupation that he considered the choicest on earth. It was during the first year of his leisure that he met Boswell, the prince of biographers.

Boswell and His Biography.—It is generally conceded that Boswell's biography of Johnson is one of the best in the English language. It is hardly an exaggeration to say with Macaulay that

"Boswell's book has done for him [Johnson] more than the best of his own books could do. The memory of other authors is kept alive by their works. But the memory of Johnson keeps many of his works alive."

Who is Boswell? He was a Scotch lawyer who became acquainted with Johnson when the latter was fifty-four years old. This acquaintanceship ripened into a friendship that lasted until Johnson's death in 1784. On Boswell's part it was more than friendship; it was idolatry. He soon made it a habit to set in his note book the conversation and doings of Johnson. Croker has carefully calculated that during the twenty-one years of Boswell's acquaintanceship with Johnson the time spent with Johnson was only two hundred and seventy-six days, including the time spent on the tour in Scotland. But Boswell did not confine himself to his own observations; he gathered from all

sources, taking the greatest pains to insure accuracy, even to running, as he declares, half over London to fix a date correctly.

His custom was to write down a conversation as soon as possible after he had heard it.

"To record his sayings after some distance of time, was like preserving or pickling long-kept and faded fruits or other vegetables, which, when in that state, have little or nothing of their taste when fresh."

When Johnson was taciturn, Boswell would use various artifices to arouse the "great Cham of literature" from lethargy to conversation, and Johnson frequently rebelled. "Sir, you have only two topics, yourself and me; I am sick of both," he growled. And at another time he informed the persistent questioner, "Questioning is not the mode of conversation among gentlemen." But Boswell, like Sir Gareth, never faltered in the quest, though there were times when even his patient forbearance was outraged. One time after Johnson had publicly insulted him, Boswell determined to impress Johnson by staying away from him. After an absence of six days they met at a dinner given by Langton. Johnson spoke to Boswell in a conciliatory manner, and, after Boswell explained that he had been insulted, Johnson said, "Well, I am sorry for it. I'll make it up to you in twenty different ways, as you please." Then Boswell replied:

"I said today to Sir Joshua, when he observed that you *tossed* me sometimes, I don't care how often, or how high he tosses me, when only friends are present, for then I fall upon soft ground: but I don't like falling on stones, which is the case when enemies are present. I think this is a pretty good image, Sir."

And Johnson declares, "Sir, it is one of the happiest I have ever heard."

It has been strongly intimated that Boswell was a good biographer because he was a fool; that he told the truth about Johnson because he did not know the difference between what hurt and what helped his reputation. Macaulay calls him a "coxcomb, and a bore, weak, vain, pushing, curious, garrulous." This, however, is but one side of the shield. He was generous, kindly,

good-tempered, and most important of all, not only did he love Johnson but Johnson undoubtedly loved him. "He did many foolish things," writes Mowbray Morris, "but assuredly he was no fool."

His Friends.—Foremost among those friends who played a large part in Johnson's life are the Thrales, whom he met in 1765. Mr. Thrale was a prosperous brewer; his wife, sixteen years younger than her husband and about thirty younger than Johnson, was a cultivated woman, vivacious, independent, sensitive, fond of books. She was as a daughter to Johnson, for sixteen years setting apart a room for him in each of her homes at Streatham and Southwark. In 1781 Mr. Thrale died and soon after the pleasant relationship was brought to an end by Mrs. Thrale's announcement that she intended to marry Piozzi, an Italian musician. Johnson was scandalized. "He hated a fiddler, and he hated a foreigner, and Piozzi was both," writes Colonel Grant. "If you have abandoned your children and your religion, God forgive your wickedness; if you have forfeited your fame and your country, may your folly do you no further mischief," cried the indignant Johnson, whose narrow and intense prejudices led him into expressions which the conduct of Mrs. Thrale, whom he had "loved, esteemed, and reverenced," did not justify.

Johnson's friends were numerous, for he had the gracious gift of making and keeping friendships. "A man," he once said to Reynolds, "ought to keep his friendships in constant repair," or in his old age he would be friendless. Though Johnson had little respect for players, David Garrick, the distinguished actor, was one of his dearest friends. He allowed no one else in his presence to praise or blame Garrick, but never hesitated to express his own opinion, however derogatory. When Goldsmith said that Garrick had grossly flattered the queen, Johnson cried out, "And as to meanness—how is it mean in a player, a showman, a fellow who exhibits himself for a shilling, to flatter his queen?" And when Boswell intimated that it might be proper to respect a great actor, Johnson exclaimed,

"What! sir, a fellow who claps a hump upon his back and a lump on his leg and cries, 'I am Richard III'? Nay, sir, a ballad singer is a higher man, for he does two things: he repeats and he sings; there is both recitation and music in his performance — the player only recites."

When Garrick wanted to be a member of the Club, Johnson opposed it and said, "If Garrick does apply, I'll blackball him. Surely we ought to be able to sit in a society like ours 'unelbowed by a gamester, pimp, or player!'" And yet some years later Johnson was in favor of Garrick's admission, and upon Garrick's death Johnson insisted that the Club should have a year of widowhood in which no successor should fill the vacant chair.

Richardson, the novelist, was another of Johnson's friends. As Johnson was more of a moralist than an artist, it is easy to understand why he thought Richardson a greater novelist than Fielding. "Fielding," said he, "could tell the hour by looking at the clock; whilst Richardson knew how the clock was run." And again, "There is more knowledge of the heart in one letter of Richardson's than in all *Tom Jones*." With this estimate of literary values, as in many other instances, modern criticism does not agree. Sir Joshua Reynolds, the artist, Edmund Burke, the most famous of British orators, Oliver Goldsmith, like Burke born in Ireland, Edward Gibbon, the great historian, were the other men whose distinguished talents added lustre to the Johnsonian group of friends.

For Burke's talent Johnson had unbounded respect. "If a man went under a shed at the same time with Burke to avoid a shower, he would say, 'This is an extraordinary man.'" Burke had equal admiration for the conversational powers of his friend. When some one regretted that Johnson had monopolized the conversation, "It is enough for me," said Burke, "to have rung the bell for him."

Goldsmith and Johnson became acquainted about 1761. Three years later we see Johnson in the role of the good Samaritan rescuing Goldsmith from arrest for debt by loaning him a guinea, and then assisting him to find a bookseller to pay sixty pounds for the manuscript of the *Vicar of Wakefield*. After Goldsmith's

eath in 1774 Johnson wrote the Latin inscription for the tomb
1 Westminster Abbey, "There was scarcely a species of writing
vhich he did not touch, and he touched none that he did not
dorn."

Macaulay's description of the meeting of the famous club
rings vividly before us the group with Johnson as the ruling
orce:

"The club-room is before us, and the table on which stands the omelet
or Nugent, and the lemons for Johnson. There are assembled those
eads which live forever on the canvas of Reynolds. There are the spec-
acles of Burke, and the tall, thin form of Langton, the courtly sneer
f Beauclerk, and the beaming smile of Garrick, Gibbon tapping his snuff-
ox, and Sir Joshua with his trumpet in his ear. In the foreground is
hat strange figure which is as familiar to us as the figures of those among
hom we have been brought up, the gigantic body, the huge, massy face
eamed with the scars of disease, the brown coat, the black worsted stock-
gs, the gray wig with the scorched foretop, the dirty hands, the nails
tten and pared to the quick. We see the eyes and mouth moving with
onvulsive twitches; we see the heavy form rolling; we hear it puffing;
id then comes the 'Why, sir!' and the 'What then, sir?' and the 'No,
r!' and the 'You don't see your way through the question, sir!'"

Personal Characteristics.—He was a manly man, hating the
ettiness that magnifies the meanness of mankind. "Those who
ook on the ground," he once remarked, "cannot avoid seeing
irt." He feared God, but was fearless of men. His throwing
way a pair of new shoes which an officious charitable friend
ad placed at his door in his Oxford days, his knocking down
ie publisher Osborne, and his defiance of the threatening Mac-
herson of Ossian fame, are typical of the man. His manliness
requently took the form of rudeness, as many an anecdote shows.
arrick's brother called him a "tremendous companion." And
oldsmith, using a phrase from Cibber, said, "There's no arguing
ith Johnson, for if his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down
ith the butt-end of it." But it is to his credit that he loved a
rong opponent, did not harbor resentment when he was hard
t, was always ready for a reconciliation, and seldom lost a
iend.

One of his most likable traits was his overflowing generosity He carried small pieces of money with him so as to give to th London waifs and vagabonds. When receiving a pension o £300 a year he allowed himself but £100 and gave away the res though the Thrales thought he usually gave away all but £70 o £80.

His house became the refuge for a miscellaneous assort ment of humanity whom he treated with a consideration tha wins our admiration. Among the inmates was a Miss William a blind lady whose occasional outbursts of temper never altere Johnson's uniform kindness. Another inmate and sharer o Johnson's hospitality was Robert Levett, formerly a waiter in Paris coffeehouse and later practicing "physic amongst the lowe classes" in London. Then there was Mrs. Desmoulins, th daughter of a Lichfield physician whom Johnson disliked. T her and a daughter he gave houseroom and an allowance amount ing to the twelfth part of his pension. A Miss Carmichael an Francis Barber, a negro manservant, for whom he provide abundantly in his will, completed this miscellaneous household Our impression of Johnson as a gruff, argumentative, domineer ing bully must be supplemented by the Johnson who was read to give all he had to the needy, who loved little children, wh provided a home for the homeless, and whose great heart include in its love stray cats and hungry dogs.

Last Days.—Although Johnson lived into his seventy-sixt year, he was never a perfectly well man. Scrofulous, nervous depressed by melancholy, and irregular in habits of eating an sleeping, nothing but a most rugged constitution can account fo his survival of so many of his contemporaries. During the las two years of his life, when dropsy and asthma afflicted him, h needed all of his fortitude and native good sense to face the fina dissolution which he had always dreaded. In the last year o his life he wrote to Lucy Porter, "Death, my dear, is ver dreadful." When Dr. Adams intimated that hell might not be place of positive suffering, Johnson replied, "I am afraid I ma be one of those who may be damned." "What do you mean b

damned?" "Sent to hell, sir, and punished everlastingly," replied Johnson vehemently.

It is pleasant to record that when the hour of death came, Johnson met it like a man. Upon being told by his physician, whom he had requested to tell the truth, that nothing short of a miracle would restore his health, Johnson said, "Then I will take no more physic, not even my opiates; for I have prayed that I may render up my soul unclouded."

From a brother of Boswell we have the following letter concerning the last hours of Johnson:

"The Doctor from the time that he was certain his death was near, appeared to be perfectly resigned, was seldom or never fretful or out of temper, and often said to his faithful servant, who gave me this account, 'Attend, Francis, to the salvation of your soul, which is the object of greatest importance': he also explained to him passages in the Scripture, and seemed to have pleasure in talking on religious subjects.

"On Monday, the 13th of December, the day on which he died, a Miss Morris, daughter to a particular friend of his, called, and said to Francis, that she be permitted to see the Doctor, that she might earnestly request him to give her his blessing. Francis went into the room, followed by the young lady, and delivered the message. The Doctor turned himself in the bed and said, "God bless you, my dear!" These were the last words he spoke."

A week later he was buried in Westminster Abbey, near the foot of the Shakspere monument and close to the grave of David Garrick. Writes Leslie Stephen:

"In visiting that strange gathering of departed heroes there are many whose words and deeds have a far greater influence upon our imaginations; but there are very few whom, when all has been said, we can love so heartily as Samuel Johnson."

"The love which we feel for Johnson is due to the fact that the pivots upon which his life turned are invariably noble motives, and not mere obedience to custom. It is as rare as it is refreshing to find a man who can stand on his own legs and be conscious of his own feelings, who is sturdy enough to react as well as to transmit action, and lofty enough to raise himself above the hurrying crowd and have some distinct belief as to whence it is coming and whither it is going."

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CHAPTER IX

Burns

"WE love Burns, and we pity him; and love and pity are prone to magnify," is the saying of that man of genius who has written so eloquently about his brother Scot. Carlyle's words were penned about a generation after the death of Burns, since then other generations, loving and pitying and magnifying, have come and gone, until today Burns ranks as one of the greatest masters of song. The word song is used advisedly, for it is as the writer of short flights of song that he has won a permanent and prominent place in the palace of art. His poetic material, compared with the quantity and range of a Milton or a Browning, seems meager and scant, but scant and meager as it is this genuine and passionate outpouring of a ploughman's heart, borne on the wings of simple melody, has touched the tens of thousands to whom Milton and Browning are but names.

Birth and Parentage.—Robert Burns was born about two miles from the town of Ayr on the 25th of January, 1759. His parents were of the Scotch yeomanry, living in a clay-built cottage, the "auld clay bigging" still standing and visited by many thousands who annually pay homage to the genius who came into the world under the most humble conditions. When the child was but a few days old a storm blew down the gable of the cottage and the mother and child were carried to a neighbor's place until the damage could be repaired. In after years the poet said, "No wonder that one ushered into the world amid such a tempest should be the victim of stormy passions."

Although his parents were in humble circumstances, they were people of character. The father, William Burness, or Burnes, for this is the earlier spelling, was living on seven acres of rented land near the Brig o' Doon. He was a man of the strictest integrity and piety, although not without a strong temper.

Robert's tribute to his father is found in *The Cotter's Saturday Night* —

> "Then, kneeling down to heaven's eternal King,
> The saint, the father, and the husband prays:"

The mother, who had been an Ayrshire lass, Agnes Brown, is described as a bright-eyed and sagacious young woman, not beautiful, but of pleasing manners and attractive personality. It is interesting to read that she had a memory full of old songs and ballads which she liked to sing and tell to her children.

Early Homes. — The three places that are early associated with the name of the poet as his homes are Mount Oliphant, Lochlea, and Mossgiel. Robert was in his seventh year when the family moved to Mount Oliphant; he was in his eighteenth when the lease expired. The lot of the family was a hard one during the years of the poet's boyhood. Robert afterwards writes of this period as combining "the cheerless gloom of a hermit with the unceasing moil of a galley-slave." And again he writes, "The farm proved a ruinous bargain. I was the eldest of seven children, and my father, worn out by early hardship, was unfit for labor. His spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken."

Our sources of information concerning this period are Robert and Gilbert, the two oldest boys, and a Mr. Murdoch, a teacher of unusual ability. Of the two boys Gilbert seemed the more attractive, having a more sunny disposition. "All the mirth and liveliness," said Murdoch, "were with Gilbert. Robert's countenance at that time wore generally a grave and thoughtful look." Under the tuition of Mr. Murdoch they learned reading, spelling and writing; they also were instructed in English grammar "were taught to turn verse into prose, to substitute synonymous expressions for poetical words, and to supply ellipses." He had little success in teaching them music; Robert who became the greatest of song writers had no ear for music, at least so it seemed at that time. When Murdoch left that community, the father took up the task of directing the education of his boys

We are told by Murdoch that the father was the best man he ever knew.

To picture that poverty-stricken household, daily trying to extract a living from the sour and unprofitable soil, as illiterate and stupid, is going far astray. Burns had an intelligent father and an excellent teacher — possessions sometimes denied a child reared in a palace. The home furnished a meager library but there was sturdy food for thought in what it did furnish. In addition to the usual school books, there were *The Spectator,* some plays of Shakspere, Pope (his translation of Homer included), Locke's *The Human Understanding,* Boyle's *Lectures,* Taylor's *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin,* and Allan Ramsay's works. To this must be added the *Bible,* whose poetry must have touched the deeps of this impressionable nature, and there was also a collection of songs, of which he writes:

"This was my *vade mecum.* I pored over them driving my cart, or walking to labor, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the true, tender, or sublime, from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is!"

First Poem. — It was while living at Mount Oliphant that his first poem was composed. Lyric poetry is the product of the emotions, and the most stimulating and creative of the emotions is love. When this adolescent of fifteen summers fell in love he burst into song. Fortunately we have his own account:

"You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labors of the harvest. In my fifteenth summer my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language, but you know the Scottish idiom. She was a bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass. In short, she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys here below! How she caught the contagion I cannot tell. . . . Indeed, I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her when returning in the evening from our labors; why the tones of her voice made my heartstrings thrill like an Æolian harp; and especially why my pulse beat such a furious ratan when I looked and fingered over her little hand to pick out the cruel nettle-stings and thistles. Among her love-inspiring qualities,

she sung sweetly; and it was her favorite reel to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who read Greek and Latin; but my girl sung a song which was said to be composed by a country laird's son, on one of his father's maids, with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for excepting that he could shear sheep and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholar-craft than myself. Thus with me began love and poetry."

The song he composed is called *Handsome Nell.* Afterwards he called it puerile and silly, but "I am always pleased with it, as it recalls to my mind those happy days when my heart was yet honest, and my tongue was sincere." Mr. Shairp, however, thinks there is some merit in the poem, and quotes this verse for its directness of feeling and felicity of language —

"She dresses aye sae clean and neat,
Baith decent and genteel,
And then there's something in her gait
Gars ony dress look weel."

At Lochlea. — From his eighteenth to twenty-fifth year Burns lived with his family at Lochlea, the farm being located on the north bank of the River Ayr. Here the growing young man entered upon a larger social life. In his seventeenth year he went to a country dancing school, "to give his manners a finish." He was young and fascinating, and soon attracted much attention, especially from the young women of the Tarbolton parish. In a short time Burns was in love, and usually with two or three girls at the same time. His susceptibility to the fair charms of the rustic beauties of his neighborhood may have been a necessary part of his poetic and emotional temperament, for with him love and poetry were inseparable, but his career would have been more honorable and his life far happier had he been less prone to fall in love. "In almost all the foul weather which Burns encountered," writes Alexander Smith, "a woman may be discovered flitting through it like a stormy petrel."

In his nineteenth year he began the study of mensuration

nder a teacher in Kirkoswald, a village of smugglers and adven-urers. The study of mensuration was soon discontinued for the nore attractive study of the charms of a country girl who lived next door to the school. While at Kirkoswald he was introduced o scenes of "swaggering riot and dissipation." In his twenty-econd year Burns fell seriously in love with Ellison Begbie, whom he wished to marry, but for some reason or other she efused him. The poem *Mary Morison* belongs to this time and efers to Ellison. One of the three stanzas runs:

"Yestreen, when to the trembling string,
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard nor saw:
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said among them a',
'Ye are na Mary Morison.'"

In the summer of 1781 he went to Irvine to learn how to dress flax. Depressed by his luckless wooing, he was ripe for dissipation. His brother Gilbert tells us that he made

some acquaintance of a freer manner of thinking and living than he had been used to, whose society prepared him for overleaping the bonds of rigid virtue which had hitherto restrained him."

One of these was a sailor-lad who was, says Robert,

the only man I ever knew who was a greater fool than myself, where woman was the presiding star; but he spoke of lawless love with levity, which hitherto I had regarded with horror. *Here his friendship did me a mischief.*"

At Mossgiel.—The two brothers had leased a small farm, Mossgiel, in 1783. In February of the subsequent year the worn-out father died at Lochlea, having expressed his fear that one of the children was destined to lead a troubled life. "O father, is it me you mean?" asked Robert, who was in the room at the time. The question was answered in the affirmative. The widowed mother and her children were removed to the Mossgiel

farm soon after the death of the head of the family. The new place was beautifully located, better adapted to poetry than to farming. Burns was determined to succeed. He says:

"I read farming books, I calculated crops, I attended markets, and, in short, in spite of the devil, the world, and the flesh, I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed — the second from a late harvest, we lost half our crops. This overset all my wisdom, and I returned like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed in her wallowing in the mire."

He remained on this farm for four years. "Three things," says Mr. Shairp, "those years and the bare moorland farm witnessed — the wreck of his hopes as a farmer, the revelation of his genius as a poet, and the frailty of his character as a man."

The uncongenial and profitless work of farming was brightened by his devotion to the poetic muse. At the end of the day's work we can imagine the ploughman retiring to his humble room to inscribe what had taken shape in his mind while doing his regular tasks. Chambers has described the room:

"The farmhouse of Mossgiel, which still exists almost unchanged since the days of the poet, is very small, consisting of only two rooms, a but and a ben, as they are called in Scotland. Over these, reached by a trap stair, is a small garret, in which Robert and his brother used to sleep. Thither, when he had returned from his day's work, the poet used to retire, and seat himself at a small deal table, lighted by a narrow skylight in the roof, to transcribe the verses which he had composed in the fields."

From the autumn of 1784 to the spring of 1786, a period of about a year and a half, Burns enjoyed the prolific springtime of his genius. During this time he wrote, *Halloween, To a Mouse, The Jolly Beggars, The Cotter's Saturday Night, Address to the Deil, The Vision, The Twa Dogs, The Mountain Daisy,* and a number of poetical epistles and satires. Of these *The Cotter's Saturday Night* is the most celebrated, and justly so; not because it is the perfect expression of the poet's genius, for Burns has written other poems that are greater in the revelation

of his poetic power, having more of the divine afflatus, as well as greater perfection in form, but he has written nothing that so truly reveals his deep reverence for that religious life which plays so large a part in the national life of Scotland. Bacchanalian songs and satires upon religious topics unfortunately play too large a part in the early poetry of Burns; it is well to remember that *The Cotter's Saturday Night* is a product of the same period. Professor Wilson called it "The noblest poem genius ever dedicated to domestic devotion." And Hazlitt compared the effect it produces to that made "by a slow and solemn music." Burns got the idea of the poem from Fergusson's *Farmer's Night*, the baser metal of which under his transforming touch was transmuted into imperishable gold.

To a Mouse is a perfect gem, expressing both the sympathetic tenderness of the poet and his ability to elevate the humblest subject into the domain of art. A farm-servant of Burns, by name John Blane, still living in 1841, has told the origin of the poem. In 1785, while working with his master in the fields of Mossgiel, he pursued a mouse with a ploughshare scraper. Burns called to him to let the poor creature alone.

"Throughout the rest of the day Burns appeared to him more than usually thoughtful, and after nightfall, Blane recalled to mind his employer rousing him from his slumbers — the two of them sleeping in the same garret chamber — to repeat to him this poem about the mouse:

"'But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane
In proving foresight may be vain!
The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a-gley,
And lea'e us nought but grief and pain
For promised joy.'"

The Poems Are Published. — Burns was discouraged; the farm was unproductive; his love affairs had brought disgrace upon him; his satiric poems directed against the strict Calvinism of the Auld Lichts had offended many good people; consequently it is not surprising that the obscure poet should plan a new life in a new land. He decided to go to Jamaica, and upon the sug-

gestion of a friend he published the poems he had been composing during the last few years. His own account follows:

"I gave up my part of the farm to my brother, and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica. But, before leaving my native country forever, I resolved to publish my poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power; I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears — a poor negro-driver, or perhaps a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the world of spirits! I can truly say, that *pauvre inconnu* as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of my works as I have at this moment, when the public has decided in their favor.

"I threw off about six hundred copies, of which I got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty. My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; and besides, I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. This sum came very seasonably, as I was thinking of indenting myself, for want of money, to procure a passage. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde, for

"'Hungry ruin had me in the wind.'

"I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail, as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my friends; my chest was on the way to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, *The gloomy night is gathering fast,* when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine overthrew all my schemes, by opening up new prospects to my poetic ambition."

In about two months the entire edition was exhausted. All who read were delighted with the wit and sensibility of this new poet. Writing of the reception of the poems, Robert Heron says:

"I was at that time resident in Galloway, contiguous to Ayrshire, and I can well remember how even plough-boys and maid-servants would gladly bestow the wages they earned most hardly, and which they wanted to purchase necessary clothing, if they might procure the works of Burns."

In Edinburgh. — The Kilmarnock edition of the poems having succeeded so well, Burns was urged to issue a new edition with

ıe imprint of an Edinburgh publisher. So to the famous capi-ıl, with its scholarly university and coterie of literary and pro-ɔssional men, the Ayrshire ploughman journeys on a borrowed ɔny. He rests the first night of this two days' journey at the ırmhouse of a Mr. Prentice, whose son in later years described ı a letter to Christopher North the advent of Burns:

"All the farmers in the parish had read the poet's then published orks, and were anxious to see him. They were all asked to see him at a te dinner, and the signal of his arrival was to be a white sheet attached a pitchfork and put on the top of a corn-stack in the barn-yard. The ırish is a beautiful amphitheater, with the Clyde winding through it. . . . Iy father's stack-yard, lying in the center, was seen from every house in ıe parish. At length Burns arrived, mounted on a borrowed *pownie.* ıstantly was the white flag hoisted, and as instantly were seen the farmers ssuing from their houses, and converging to the point of meeting. A lorious evening, or rather night, which borrowed something from the ɔrning, followed, and the conversation of the poet confirmed and ıcreased the admiration created by his writings."

On November 28, 1786, he reached Edinburgh, and took lodg-ıgs with a humble Mauchline acquaintance, where he remained ıat winter, he and his friend paying three shillings a week for ıe room and bed. From this little room he sallied forth to meet ıe best of Edinburgh society. A review of his poetry appeared ı *The Lounger,* a periodical of some note, in which the asser-on was made that a poet of national prominence had arisen. A number of persons have testified as to the effect Burns pro-uced upon the various men and women he met during this first ınter in Edinburgh. Dugald Stewart, the professor of moral hilosophy, has given us this record:

"The attention he received from all ranks and descriptions of persons ould have turned any head but his own. I cannot say that I perceived ıy unfavorable effect which they left on his mind. He retained the same mplicity which had struck me so forcibly when first I saw him in the ountry, nor did he seem to feel any additional self-importance from the ımber and rank of his new acquaintance. He walked with me in spring, ırly in the morning, to the Braid Hills, when he charmed me still more his private conversation than he had ever done in company. . . . The ea which his conversation conveyed of the powers of his mind exceeded,

if possible, that which is suggested by his writings. All his faculties were as far as I could judge, equally vigorous, and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned temper than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. I should have pronounced him fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen."

Second Winter in Edinburgh.—From Edinburgh he made a short Border tour and then returned to Mossgiel, where the fame of his brilliant winter in the city had preceded him. While despising the servility of some of his neighbors, his attitude towards his own family was simple and generous. His youngest sister, Mrs. Beggs, relates

"that her brother went to Glasgow, and thence sent home a present to his mother and three sisters, namely, a quantity of *mode* silk, enough to make a bonnet and a cloak to each, and a gown besides to his mother and youngest sister."

After a brief visit at Mossgiel, he went on a longer tour through the Highlands and then, in October, 1787, returned to Edinburgh for an unfortunate and unhappy visit of five months. His first visit had been marked by frequent entertainment by lords and ladies of high rank, by university professors and literary lights interspersed with carousals in the society of boon tavern companions; his second visit was passed in the companionship of a less select society. To this period belongs his infatuation for a Mrs. M'Lehose, with whom he conducted a three months' correspondence, which has been unfortunately preserved and published. Disappointed and disheartened, Burns left Edinburgh in March, 1788, never to return except for an occasional day's visit.

Writing of the contrast between his first and second reception at Edinburgh, Allan Cunningham says:

"On his first appearance the doors of the nobility opened spontaneously, 'on golden hinges turning,' and he ate spiced meats and drank rare wines, interchanging nods and smiles with high dukes and mighty earls. A colder reception awaited his second coming. The doors of lords and ladies opened with a tardy courtesy; he was received with

cold and measured stateliness, was seldom requested to stop, seldomer repeat his visit; and one of his companions used to relate with what dignant feeling the poet recounted his fruitless calls and his uncordial ceptions in the good town of Edinburgh. . . . He went to Edinburgh rong in the belief that genius such as his would raise him in society; he turned not without a sourness of spirit and a bitterness of feeling."

However, he did not leave Edinburgh without having some ngible result of his visit: First, he had received much of what as due him from his publisher, some estimate the profits of ne second edition as about £500. Of this amount Robert generusly gave his brother Gilbert £180, who needed the money to arry on the Mossgiel farm; second, he had leased the Ellisland arm; third, he had obtained an appointment in the Excise. In letter to Miss Chalmers, Burns wrote with a simplicity and andor that does him credit:

"I have chosen this, my dear friend, after mature deliberation. The uestion is not at what door of fortune's palace shall we enter in, but hat doors does she open for us. I was not likely to get anything to do. got this without hanging-on, or mortifying solicitation; it is immediate read, and though poor in comparison of the last eighteen months of my xistence, 'tis luxury in comparison of all my preceding life."

Marriage and Life at Ellisland.—In the latter part of April, 788, he was quietly married to Jean Armour. His previous elationship with Jean Armour is a story of passion and sin, in hich the part played by Burns is one of weakness, remorse, and ame, with occasional manly and generous impulses, the best of hich was his final resolution to marry her in legal form. Jean ad many admirable qualities, some of which the poet described a letter to Mrs. Dunlop:

"The most placid good-nature and sweetness of disposition; a warm eart, gratefully devoted with all its powers to love me; vigorous health nd sprightly cheerfulness, set off to the best advantage by a more than ommonly handsome figure: these, I think, in a woman may make a good ife, though she should have never read a page but the Scriptures of the ld and New Testament, nor have danced in a brighter assembly than a enny-pay wedding."

This is the cool appraisement of a merchant buying good and denotes little of the lover. But that he loved his Jean evidenced by several of the simplest and most passionate lyri in literature. Their very simplicity attests their genuineness a the expression of a loving heart. But Burns was so mercuri that his love easily passed from day to day into all the modes o feeling, ranging from passionate love through indifference t hate.

It was while he was out on the Ellisland farm, building th house for his little family, that he composed *Of a' the airts th wind can blaw,* and *O, were I on Parnassus' hill.*

"Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lassie I lo'e best:
There wild woods grow, and rivers row,
And monie a hill between;
But day and night my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

"I see her in the dewy flowers,
I see her sweet and fair:
I hear her in the tunefu' birds,
I hear her charm the air:
There's not a bonnie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green;
There's not a bonnie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean."

The other song, *O, were I on Parnassus' hill!* is not so frequent quoted, although it also is an exquisite lyric. One of its thr stanzas runs:

"By night, by day, a-field, at hame,
The thoughts of thee my breast inflame;
And aye I muse and sing thy name—
I only live to love thee.
Tho' I were doom'd to wander on,
Beyond the sea, beyond the sun,
Till my last weary sand was run;
Till then—and then I'd love thee."

Burns entered upon his farm life at Ellisland with hopefulness and a greater peace than he had enjoyed for years. His troubled conscience had ceased to sting, for he felt that he had acted honorably. He now hoped to live the quiet and sedate life of the farmer. He became the "gudeman" of the house, for a time gathering his family and the few servants about the family altar of Scripture reading and prayer. He prudently made application for his appointment as Exciseman, an office which paid £50 a year. To this office there was attached some odium, but a wife and children to be supported on a farm whose crops were apt to be failures were strong arguments to lay aside prejudice and disinclination.

A Mr. Clark, a man who worked for Burns during the winter half-year of 1789–90, in his old age gave his recollections of Burns as a farmer at Ellisland. He tells us that Burns kept two men servants and two women servants; that the master was as good a manager as the average neighbor; that the farm was stocked with nine or ten milch cows, some young cattle, four horses, and several pet sheep; that during the six months of his service he never saw Burns intoxicated or incapable of managing his business. Clark also describes Mrs. Burns as a good and efficient housewife.

However, Burns failed as a farmer, and in the last week of August, 1791, an auction was held to dispose of the poet's possessions. "Faith," said one of the neighbors, "how could he miss but fail? He brought with him a bevy of servants from Ayrshire. The lasses did nothing but bake bread, and the lads sat by the reside and ate it warm with ale."

Last Days. — From Ellisland he moved to Dumfries, a provincial town, where gossip, idleness, and drinking flourished, and where Burns found congenial society sufficient to help him on his downward path to ruin. All his biographers lament that Burns was obliged to leave the peaceful rural scenes of the farm for the temptations of the provincial town. The poet was by this time a famous man; the traveler who tarried at Dumfries was glad to invite the brilliant Exciseman to a friendly bowl of punch, and

Burns was too weak to refuse. His infidelity to his wife, his drunken carousals, his lack of money, his failing health — these are the ingredients that filled his cup of remorse to overflowing.

In June, 1794, he writes to Mrs. Dunlop that his health is failing; in the spring of the next year he told some one that he felt like an old man, but he continued his duties as an Exciseman. But in the fall of that year, it is said by some, that he had to take his bed. In the spring of 1796 he tried sea-bathing at a near-by coast; but all efforts to stay the progress of his malady were unavailing; he died on the 21st of July, 1796.

His Character. — Ten years before his death, Burns wrote the *Bard's Epitaph,* of which one stanza is,

> "The poor inhabitant below
> Was quick to learn and wise to know,
> And keenly felt the friendly glow
> And softer flame,
> But thoughtless follies laid him low,
> And stained his name."

Lines which are, as Wordsworth put it, "A confession at once devout, poetical, and human — a history in the shape of a prophecy." Burns had no illusions about himself; he scorned pretension and hated hypocrisy. Not every one of his critics has been as honest and discriminating as the poet whose charming personality and buoyant genius have sometimes bewitched the judgment. Some of his most enthusiastic admirers refuse to see any evil in the man Burns, or condone it because of his genius as though genius were not limited by the moral law; others, Robert Louis Stevenson among the number, think this brilliant poet, by the example of his life and the revelry of his bacchanalian songs, has done much to demoralize the people of Scotland. In passing judgment, one dare not forget that Burns lived in the turbulent times of the eighteenth century, an age in which religion had sunk into formalism, and when vulgarity and drunkenness were gentlemanly vices. It must also be placed to his credit that after many of the ballads and songs of the people had passed

rough his transforming touch they emerged purified and nobled.

His life is a wretched tragedy, the tragedy of rare gifts and enerous impulses continually thwarted by passion and weakness f will. He knew his power, and lamented his weakness; he ever lost his sense of right and wrong; no one more bitterly mented his lapses. His penitential poems, like those of the spired singer of Israel, great in their candor and simplicity, ow how persistently the "vestal fire of conscience" kept burn- g upon the altar of his soul.

Characteristics of His Poetry.—1. Wordsworth thinks the ading characteristic of Burns's poetry is its truthfulness. He as given us an accurate transcript of his own emotions, and a erfect picture of the life of Scotland, with its pathos, humor, udgery, revelry, piety, and hypocrisy. It has been said that his oetry contains no great characters; this is because he writes f things and men as he knew them, and his environment fur- shed him no figures of heroic size. His it was to interpret the short and simple annals of the poor." "No wonder the peas- ntry of Scotland have loved Burns as perhaps never people ved a poet," writes Principal Shairp.

"He not only sympathized with the wants, the trials, the joys and rrows of their obscure lot, but he interpreted these to themselves, and terpreted them to others, and this too in their own language, made usical and glorified by genius. He made the poorest ploughman proud his station and his toil, since Robbie Burns had shared and had sung em."

2. He restored to Scotchmen the feeling of nationality. In s day the men of ability of Scotland tried to forget that they ere natives of Caledonia. The vernacular was despised; to be uilty of a Scotticism was a literary crime. By his original triotic songs and by his revival of the old songs and ballads, urns quickened national consciousness.

3. He has broadened our sympathies by preaching the noble octrine of the brotherhood of man, one might say the brother- ood of man and beasts, for his pity extended to the mouse of

the field. He has produced between two and three hundred songs.

"They appeal to all ranks, they touch all ages, they cheer toil-worn men under every clime. Wherever the English tongue is heard, beneath the suns of India, amid African deserts, on the western prairies of America, among the squatters of Australia, whenever men of British blood would give vent to their deepest, kindliest, most genial feelings, it is to the songs of Burns they spontaneously turn, and find in them at once perfect utterance, and a fresh tie of brotherhood. It is this which forms Burns's most enduring claim on the world's gratitude."

4. He has quickened our appreciation of nature, not through any subtleties, but by the childlike simplicity of his appeal. It must be remembered that Burns is the forerunner of Wordsworth and Tennyson, of Byron and Shelley, of Bryant and Whittier, nature-lovers whose popular poetry has raised "love of nature" into almost a religious cult. Burns was born into an age of formalism, of precision, of classic dignity; and while it is true that he is greatly indebted to Ramsay and Fergusson, his Scotch predecessors, yet it is the glory of Burns, as well as a tribute to his sincerity, that in one respect he saw the world as Homer saw it — with the freshness of youth and the simple wonder of a child.

Poetic Diction. — Burns is sometimes regarded as distinctively a Scottish poet, with a dialect whose meanings could be appreciated only by the few who in childhood had learned the vernacular. It is true that there are many poems, especially the humorous and satirical, which are unintelligible to the English reader without the aid of a glossary; on the other hand, about half of his serious work is done in English pure and undefiled. It is also true that many usually considered as distinctively dialect poems have very little of the Ayrshire vernacular in them. In *Scots Wha Hae,* a poem of twenty-four lines, there are only five words which are not English, and these are easily transformed into English. David Christie Murray has pointed out that in the *Lines to a Mountain Daisy* there are but eight Ayrshire words in this poem of fifty-four lines. In *Mary in Heaven,*

ıe of the sweetest and most loved of all his lyrics, we have "no trusion of a hint of Scots." In the eighty-eight lines of *Man 'as Made to Mourn* there is no dialect, while in the world-ımous *Cotter's Saturday Night* but fifty lines out of one hundred ıd eighty contain any dialect.

A critic has lamented that Burns often *descended* into English; ıis is a foolish regret, for Burns would have had a limited field f influence had he kept strictly to the Ayrshire dialect. His ıdience would have been very much restricted and his medium f expression would have been lacking in that variety and copi-usness which were furnished by the highly developed English ıguage.

Burns had in reality two languages from which to choose —the one rich in the intimacies of domestic affection and in ıe expressiveness of rural life; the other ennobled and enriched y the Miltons and Shaksperes of classic English. To attain igh distinction in poetry, the maker must have more than the ıeager vocabulary of an undeveloped dialect.

In rollicking *Tam O'Shanter,* the work of a day — Alexander ımith enthusiastically calls it the best day's work Scotland has ɛen since Bannockburn — we have the most puzzling dialect ɔgether with the purest English. As an example of dialect —

> "She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum,
> A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
> That frae November till October,
> Ae market-day thou was na sober;
> That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
> Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
> That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,
> The smith and thee gat roaring fou on."

A few lines further on, in purest English, we find the oft-ıoted

> "But pleasures are like poppies spread,
> You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed;
> Or like the snow falls in the river,
> A moment white — then melts forever."

So, too, in the midst of all the dialect of his inimitable *To Mouse* we have the English of these stanzas:

"I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle,
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

. . . . . .

"Still thou are blest, compar'd wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, Och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
An' forward, tho' I canna see,
I guess an' fear!"

His Democratic Spirit.—Every man is partly the product of his environment. Poets who, like Burns, are sensitive and impressionable, owe much to the Zeitgeist. "The influences under which Burns was tutored into song," writes Dr. Service, "were as eminently European in fact, as they were singularly provincial in form." The latter days of Burns were the stirring times of the French Revolution—an event, some think, the most stupendous since the birth of Christ. With this tremendous upheaval of society, with its defiance and protest, its cry of "Liberty, Fraternity, and Equality," Burns was deeply sympathetic. The Scotchman has always resented despotism and been ready to espouse the cause of freedom. Hamilton Wright Mabie writes:

"Rugged as their climate and soil made them, thrifty and laborious as stern conditions compelled them to be, standing century after century sword in hand, with their backs to the wall, they were always lovers of poetry, dreamers of dreams, spinners of stories, children of romance, given to impossible loyalties and lost causes, frugally counting the cost to the utmost penny, and then casting prudence to the wind and putting the last penny to the hazard in some desperate idealism. . . . Stern independence, lofty pride, dauntless courage—these were in the blood of the Scotch. They were often monarchists, they were never courtiers; they could die for their kings, but they could not bend the knee to them."

Burns is great because he expresses with the simplicity of art the feeling of nationality; he becomes the articulate voice of a whole people.

Burns took more than a theoretic interest in the Revolution. Though his employment in the government service placed him under the strongest obligation to loyalty, he occasionally openly expressed his sympathy with the revolutionists both by word and act. In 1792 he purchased four of the guns of a captured brig and sent them with a letter to the French Legislative Assembly. Neither the letter nor the guns ever reached their destination. At a dinner, when Pitt's health was proposed, Burns rose and proposed a toast "to the health of a much better man — General Washington." On another occasion his toast was, "The last verse of the last chapter of the last Book of Kings." And finally we are told by Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe that at a dramatic performance at Dumfries, when *God Save the King* was called for, the audience rose with heads uncovered, but Burns sat still in the pit with his hat on his head. All these acts show his spirit, but it also is unfortunately true that they brought him little but irritation and despondency, for he felt that his conduct was such as to lay him open to the suspicion of disloyalty to that government in whose service he worked with the hope of promotion.

In *For a' that, an' a' that,* a song resonant with the defiant spirit of individualism, we have a Declaration of Independence understood by the common people:

"Is there, for honest poverty,
That hangs his head, an' a' that?
The coward slave we pass him by;
We dare be poor, for a' that!
For a' that, an' a' that,
Our toil's obscure, an' a' that,
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that."

Burns was always sensitive on the subject of social distinctions, and at times allowed his own false pride to lead him

into injustice. A man as intellectually great as he was shoul have been great enough to manifest his superiority through th dignity and worth of his character. Nature had treated hir magnanimously in the bestowal of rare and precious gifts; wh should he have been embittered in seeing others endowed wit mere lands and silver, the *impedimenta* of life? We find a trac of this social bitterness in his

> "Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
> Wha struts, an' stares, an' a' that;
> Tho' hundreds worship at his word,
> He's but a coof for a' that."

No man is a fool because he happens to be a lord, any more tha he is a fool because he is poor.

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CHAPTER X

Byron

IN *Don Juan* Byron refers to himself as the "grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme," and the Spaniard Castelar in an eloquent eulogy speaks of Byron as "condemned from the cradle by a cruel destiny to the infernal deities." There is much truth in both assertions, for Byron was a brilliant poet but an unfortunate man. His sudden rise to the supremacy of song is almost as spectacular as the rapid upward career of the wonderful Corsican, while the record of his unhappy life is the story of one who seems to have been "condemned from the cradle." In making a superficial study of Byron it is easy to condemn him unreservedly — it is so easy to see the egotist, the *poseur,* the snobbish aristocrat, the selfish sensualist, the spoiled darling of a decadent society — but a fuller study of this brilliant and witty poet will reveal another Byron, the Byron who is a lover of truth, a hater of sham, a man of boundless generosity, a poet who can both feel and portray the grand elemental moods of nature. "Angel or demon?" asks Lamartine. Byron was neither, but he was very human, and that means there was something both angelic and demonic in his nature. Joaquin Miller had men like Burns and Byron in mind when he wrote:

> "In men whom men condemn as ill
> I find so much of goodness still,
> In men whom men pronounce divine
> I find so much of sin and blot,
> I hesitate to draw a line
> Between the two, where God has not."

Birth and Parentage. — George Gordon Byron, born January 22, 1788, in London, was the only son of Captain Jack Byron and Catharine Gordon. The Byrons trace their descent from the

de Buruns of the Norman conquest. Byron prided himself upon his ancestry, at one time advancing the snobbish opinion that he and his aristocratic friends were, of course, greater poets than Wordsworth and the other Lakers, because the Lakers were not Peers. Byron, however, had little reason to be proud of his immediate ancestors, for, though he must have inherited a wonderful nervous system, one keen, alert, and responsive to the external world of sound, form, and color, he also inherited those unfortunate characteristics and tendencies that justify Castelar in calling Byron "condemned from the cradle." Byron's father "Mad Jack," as he was called, had a bad record. He ran away with the wife of the Marquis of Carmarthen; bad as this was, his conduct towards her after she had become his legal wife was worse, for he treated her with heartless cruelty. She died in 1784, having given birth to two daughters, one of whom, Augusta, plays so important a part in the life of our poet. About a year after the death of his first wife, "Mad Jack" married Miss Catharine Gordon of Gight, who was the owner of estates in Aberdeenshire—a fact which enhanced her worth in the estimation of her spendthrift wooer. In five years the English profligate had squandered his wife's property, and a year or two after Byron's birth the father fled to escape his importunate creditors. In 1791 he died in France.

Mrs. Byron, in some respects, was as ill-adapted to be the parent of a great poet as was the father. She was proud, impetuous, whimsical. "Your mother's a fool!" once said a schoolboy to Byron. "I know it," was the laconic reply. "She was vehement, hysterical, and, on the whole, would seem to have been appointed in irony to train this volcanic child of abnormal sensibility and genius," says Roden Noel. On one occasion she ended a tirade by calling him a "lame brat!" It is said with quivering lips and flashing eye he replied, "I was born so, mother!"

This lameness of Byron's was a continual source of keen annoyance to his sensitive soul. Even when on his deathbed he thought of it, for he objected to having his feet blistered, but

llowed the blisters to be placed on his legs above the knees. It s sometimes said that he had a club-foot, but his deformity has been described as follows:

"The right *Achilles tendon* was so contracted that he could never put he foot flat on the ground, wearing for it a boot made with a high heel, nd a padding inside under the heel of the foot; indeed, the tendons of oth feet were contracted; he had to walk on the balls and toes of both eet."

In view of this deformity it can readily be understood why Byron preferred such sports as riding and swimming.

Schooldays.— When Byron was thirteen and a half he entered Harrow, one of the great English schools. Its Headmaster was Dr. Joseph Drury, a man of force and scholarship, whose influence on Byron was wholesome. Dr. Drury gives the following account of his first impressions of his new pupil:

"I took my young disciple into my study, and endeavored to bring him orward by inquiries as to his former amusements, employments, and asso iates, but with little or no effect, and I soon found that a wild mountain olt had been submitted to my management. But there was mind in his ye. . . . His manner and temper soon convinced me that he might be led y a silken string to a point, rather than a cable: on that principle I acted."

Byron learned to respect the Headmaster very highly, and wrote, ater in life, this appreciation:

"He was the best, the kindest (and yet strict, too) friend I ever had; nd I look on him still as a father, whose warnings I have remembered too ell, though too late, when I have erred, and whose counsel I have but ollowed when I have done well or wisely."

Like most geniuses, and like thousands who are not geniuses, Byron did not distinguish himself in his school studies; the regular routine work did not attract him; he did no more than he ad to do. It is interesting to note that he excelled in oratory nd declamation rather than in poetry. Neither in the classics or in the modern languages was he ever a proficient scholar. talian is the only modern language in which he excelled, though e had more than a smattering of French and German. But

although he was not of that temperament which leads to scholar ship and learning through persistent application to the prescribe studies of the curriculum, he had that enormous appetite fo information which is one of the characteristics of genius. H was an omnivorous reader in those early days, and with a mem ory remarkable for its tenacity he stored away a surprisin amount of general knowledge. "I read eating, read in bed, rea when no one else reads."

In the University. — In 1805 Byron entered Trinity College Cambridge, and for about three years kept up an irregula attendance, leaving in 1808. His record at Cambridge is not tha of the cloistered scholar quietly and studiously absorbing the wis dom of the past in the dim religious light of consecrated halls but rather the record of a "gay sport" whose interests were i shooting, gambling, drinking, swimming, feasting, and, strang to say, fasting. But this is not all of his Cambridge experience A pleasanter side was the formation of friendships with such men as Matthews and Hobhouse. By common consent Matthew was considered the most brilliant and likable man in Universit circles. He was drowned in 1811, while swimming alone in th reedy Cam. Hobhouse became the life-long friend of Byron and was a valued adviser and sturdy helper in time of trouble Davies was another close friend of whom the following inciden is related: "Once when the poet in one of his fits of petulanc cried out, trying to produce a terrible impression, 'I shall g mad!' Davies calmly and cuttingly observed, 'It is much mor like silliness than madness.'" This friend is said to be th only man who ever placed Byron under serious pecuniary obliga tion. He loaned Byron £4,800, a sum repaid by Byron in 1814 at which time in celebration of the repayment the pair dran claret and champagne from six till midnight, after which "Scrop (Davies) could not be got into the carriage on the way home, bu remained tipsy and pious on his knees." Another friend wa Hodgson, who became a clergyman. Later in life Hodgso was worried by a bad debt of £1,000 which he had inherited Byron, with one of his characteristic generous impulses, paid o

the debt. It is pleasant to think of the friendships that Byron contracted in his college days, for so much of that time seems to have been wasted in dissipation and in neglecting the opportunities of his vigorous young manhood.

Hours of Idleness. — In 1807, while Byron was still an undergraduate at Cambridge, he published *Hours of Idleness,* his first book of poetry. In it were about seventy poems of no unusual merit; just such poetry as any clever collegian with the knack of versification might produce. In the preface he apologizes "for obtruding myself on the world, when, without doubt, I might be, at my age, more usefully employed." And in the next paragraph he assures us that "These productions are the fruits of the lighter hours of a young man who has lately completed his nineteenth year." In the concluding paragraph he informs us that this is the first and last attempt, and also that he would rather incur the "bitterest censure of anonymous criticism, than triumph in honors granted solely to a title." If Byron had had any fears that belonging to the House of Lords might silence the voice of sturdy criticism, he was soon undeceived. In March, 1808, the *Edinburgh Review* appeared with a criticism that drove Byron to three bottles of claret on the evening in which he read the article. The weak are overcome by opposition, the strong are strengthened. It is a favorite theory of Fichte, the great German philosopher, that nations and individuals grow by opposition. Byron is a good illustration of the theory. Later in life, when driven from England by public opinion, he did his best work while an exile in Italy. At this time he showed the mettle of his pasture by writing *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.* This bitter satire, modeled on Pope, whom he had studied to good purpose, appeared in the spring of 1809 and was immediately successful. The public enjoyed seeing the professional critic seethed in his own milk. However, Byron in later editions modified his strictest censures, especially those directed against his fellow poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge.

Marriage. — Upon the publication of the first two cantos of *Childe Harold,* following two years of travel in which most of

his time was spent in Spain and Greece, Byron, as is so often quoted, "awoke and found himself famous." Byron became the most popular man in London. He was a handsome man, and in addition was a poet and a peer! To be a handsome peer of the realm would be sufficient to attract the attention of the lion hunters; to be a famous poet, besides, was dangerous for a man of Byron's temperament. Lady Caroline Lamb writes: "The women suffocated him with their adulation in drawing rooms."

Byron's relationship with the fair sex is open to severe criticism. He had affairs of the heart from his early boyhood, and in many of them he acted selfishly. His ideal of womanhood is not the ideal of a Shakspere or a Tennyson. At one time he wrote of women:

"I look on them as grown-up children; but like a foolish mamma, I am constantly the slave of one of them. The Turks shut up their women and are much happier; give a woman a looking-glass and burnt almonds and she will be content."

On January 2, 1815, Byron and Miss Anne Isabella Millbanke were married; about a year later, with her daughter, about five weeks old, the young wife left her husband, never to return. And ever since the tongues of friends and enemies have been wagging, telling how it came to pass. But thus far no one has been able to give a satisfactory explanation.

"Lady Byron was a clever woman, a philanthropic one. But she was not very magnanimous, not a heroine, not the kind of woman to influence so divergent a character as the man she married, partly hoping to reform him."

With a knowledge of the austere and conventional character of Lady Byron, and the erratic and inflammable temperament of Lord Byron, it is not difficult to imagine a trivial cause of separation; at least it is unnecessary to advance an act of brutality or abominable scandal as the direct cause. It is well to keep in mind that Byron, again and again, declared that he was in complete ignorance of the cause of separation, and also that for some

me after the separation he spoke of his wife in the kindest rms.

Byron Leaves England.—The British public now poured out ie bitterest vials of its wrath upon the luckless head of Byron. n the day of his success he had been over-praised; now he was ver-blamed. He was tried, condemned, and executed without hearing. He was charged with the foulest vices in the cata-gue of human depravity. The most profligate and depraved of oman Emperors were not quite so wicked as this son of Belial ho had disgraced the British Peerage. He says:

"I was accused of every monstrous vice by public rumor and private ancor; my name, which had been a knightly or noble one since my athers helped to conquer the kingdom for William the Norman, was inted. I felt that if what was whispered, and muttered, and murmured as true, I was unfit for England; if false, England was unfit for me."

On the 25th of April Byron left England for the Continent. Ve soon find him at Geneva with Shelley, whose influence on yron's poetry can be detected in the third and fourth cantos of *hilde Harold*. It was during this time, while making little xcursions about the lake, that Byron wrote the famous *Prisoner f Chillon,* completing the poem in two days.

"Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls
A thousand feet in depth below,
Its massy waters meet and flow."

In October our poet crossed the Alps to Italy, where the most roductive of his poetic years were passed. In Venice he led a issipated life, weakening his constitution, and preparing himself o be a victim of the bad climate and unsanitary conditions of Iissolonghi.

The worst of his dissipations were checked by his infatuation or the Countess Guiccioli, or rather by her infatuation for him. he was the daughter of Count Gamba, a poor Italian nobleman, ho had married her, when she was but sixteen, to Count Guic-oli, a rich widower of sixty. Moore writes of her meeting yron:

"Suddenly the young Italian found herself inspired with a passion c which till that moment her mind could not have formed the least ide She had thought of love as an amusement, and now became its slave."

The relationship that ensued between Byron and the Countes was culpable, but it is well to remember that her own husban condoned it, and that later her father and brother were Byron' best friends and admirers. The Countess had a long and whole some influence upon the wayward poet, whose excesses were nov restrained. It is generally supposed that Byron has the Countes Guiccioli in mind in his description of Aurora Raby in *Don Juan*

"Aurora Raby, a young star who shone
O'er life, too sweet an image for such glass,
A lovely being, scarcely form'd or moulded,
A rose with all its sweetest leaves yet folded.
. . . . . .
Radiant and grave — as pitying man's decline;
Mournful — but mournful of another's crime,
She look'd as if she sate by Eden's door,
And grieved for those who could return no more."

The Countess Compares Byron and Shelley. — That th Countess Guiccioli was a woman of some discernment is mani fested in the following comparison of the two distinguishe English poets, Byron and Shelley:

"In Shelley's heart the dominant wish was to see society entirel reorganized. The sight of human miseries and infirmities distressed hin to the greatest degree; but, too modest himself to believe that he wa called upon to take the initiative, and inaugurate a new era of good govern ment and fresh laws for the benefit of humanity, he would have bee pleased to see such a genius as Byron take the initiative in this under taking. Shelley therefore did his best to influence Byron. But the latte hated discussions. He could not bear entering into philosophical specu lation at times when his soul craved the consolations of friendship, an his mind a little rest. He was quite insensible to reasonings, which ofte appear sublime because they are clothed in words incomprehensible t those who have not sought to understand their meaning. But he made a exception in favor of Shelley. He knew that he could not shake his fait in a doctrine founded on illusions, by his incredulity; but he listened t him with pleasure, not only on account of Shelley's good faith and sin

ity, but also because he argued upon false data, with such talent and ginality, that he was both interested and amused. Lord Byron had mined every form of philosophy by the light of common-sense, and the instinct of his genius. Pantheism in particular was odious to him. drew no distinction between absolute Pantheism which mixes up that ich is infinite with that which is finite, and that form of Pantheism ich struggles in vain to keep clear of Atheism. Shelley's views, clothed a veil of spiritualism, were the most likely to interest Byron, but they l not fix him. Byron could never consent to lose his individuality, deny ; own freedom of will, or abandon the hope of a future existence. As a tter of fact, Byron attributed all Shelley's views to the aberrations of mind which is happier when it dreams than when it denies."

Byron in Greece. — In reading of the last days of Byron, one calls the lines in *Macbeth* relating to Cawdor —

". . . nothing in his life
Became him like the leaving it."

yron had his faults, and grievously has he paid for them, but also had his virtues, and in no aspect of his life do his generity and nobility show themselves so well as in his relation with e Greek struggle for liberty. He said:

"I have made as many sacrifices to liberty as most people of my age; d the one I am about to undertake is not the least, though probably it ll be the last; for with my broken health, and the chances of war, eece will most likely terminate my career. . . . I have a presentiment t I shall die in Greece. I hope it may be in action, for that would be a od finish to a very *triste* existence, and I have a horror of death-bed nes; but as I have not been famous for my luck in life, most probably hall not have more in the manner of my death."

This presentiment was fulfilled, for Byron died in Greece, not the manner that he would have preferred, on the field of battle, t from a fever whose unfortunate effects were largely increased the attending physicians, against whose panacea, bleeding, he sely protested.

In May, 1823, Byron learned that he had been elected a mem- r of the Committee, which sat in London, to promote the cause the Greeks. In July of the same year Byron, with Trelawney, unt Pietro Gamba, Dr. Bruno, and eight servants, set sail

from Genoa on the English brig *Hercules*. The crew was commanded by Captain Scott. On board were also five horses, arms, ammunition, and two one-pounder guns taken from the *Bolivar*. Byron took with him 10,000 Spanish dollars in cash, and 40,000 more in bills of exchange.

Byron's Prudence. — Byron has been censured for not taking an active and prominent part in Greek affairs as soon as he reached Greece. Trelawney thought that Byron was "shilly-shallying and doing nothing." Trelawney himself was a man of quick decision and ready action, and it is not strange that he misjudged the deliberation of his friends — especially as Byron himself in many ways was as impulsive as Trelawney. Gamba took a more charitable view — "By perseverance and discernment Byron hoped to assist in the liberation of Greece. To know and to be known was consequently, from the outset, his principal object." Instead of censuring Byron for his hesitation in plunging into the thick of the contest, one must commend his prudence, for Greece was torn by factions. Byron had an unselfish desire to help the Greeks; to be of the greatest service he needed to keep from factional quarrels. In a letter headed, *Cephalonia, November 30, 1823,* Byron made an appeal to the executive and legislative bodies of the Greek nation. An extract from this letter will show Byron's clear understanding of the situation:

"We have heard some rumors of new dissensions — nay, of the existence of a civil war. With all my heart, I pray that these reports may be false or exaggerated, for I can imagine no calamity more serious than this; and I most frankly confess, that unless union and order are established, all hopes of a loan will be vain."

Also in a letter to his sister we find a clear expression both of his disinterested motive in going to Greece and of the difficulty of helping its people after he had reached that distracted land:

"You ask me why I came up amongst the Greeks. It was stated to me that my doing so might tend to their advantage in some measure, in their present struggle for independence, both as an individual and as a member for the Committee now in England. How far this may be realized I cannot pretend to anticipate, but I am willing to do what I can. They

ve at length found leisure to quarrel amongst themselves, after repelling ir other enemies, and it is no very easy part that I may have to play avoid appearing partial to one or other of their factions. . . . You may ppose I have something to *think* of at least, for you can have no idea at an intriguing, cunning, unquiet generation they are; and as emissaries all parties come to me at present, and I must act impartially, it makes exclaim, as Julian did at his military exercises, 'Oh! Plato, what a k for a philosopher!'"

Byron Dies.—Where and how far Byron's devotion to e Greek cause would have led him, we cannot say. There are ose who say that his ultimate ambition was to become king. here is no doubt but that such a high title and such power would ve appealed to much in the nature of Byron, but there is no idence that he was scheming to obtain the crown. Before yron had been in Greece a year his end had come. In the spring 1824 we find him at Missolonghi, a village of about 3,000. he sanitary conditions were sickening. Millingen says that the ildings were so constructed that the most loathsome substances ere emptied into the streets. Trelawney describes the place as tuated on the verge of a dismal swamp. The place was dan-rous for a strong man—for Byron it was fatal, for he was t a strong man when he went to Greece. An irregular manner life, with fasts and strange and whimsical dietings, together th dissipation, had weakened the poet's constitution.

On the 9th of April Byron and Gamba, while taking a horse-ck ride, were caught in a heavy rain. "Two hours after his turn home," Gamba tells us, "he was seized with a shudder-g: he complained of fever and rheumatic pains. At eight in e evening I entered his rooms; he was lying on a sofa, restless d melancholy." Dr. Bruno, who had great faith in bleeding, ggested the use of the lancet. Byron showed his good sense declining, saying, "Have you no other remedy than bleeding? here are many more die of the lancet than of the lance." Two three days later Byron felt well enough to take another ride, s last, for the fever grew worse until by the 16th he was lmost constantly delirious." On the 19th, after having been sensible for twenty-four hours, he passed away. Before becom-

ing unconscious, he was heard to say, "I am content to die." C Greece he said, "I have given her my all — my means, my healt and now I give her my life! What could I do more?"

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage. — This is a poem in four canto written in the Spenserian stanza. The preface to the first ar second cantos is dated, London, February, 1812; the fourth cant dedicated to his staunch friend, John Hobhouse, is dated, Venic January 2, 1818. The writing of the poem occupied eight yea of the poet's life, as the first canto was begun in October, 1809.

As the title indicates, the poem is the romantic account the wanderings of a young nobleman whose poetic soul is inspire by the scenes and associations of the places he visits. Harold a resident of England. Trying to give his style an archaic flav by the introduction of an occasional Spenserian term — an attem which is soon abandoned — Byron tells us:

> "Whilome in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth
> Who ne in virtue's way did take delight,
> But spent his days in riot most uncouth,
> And vexed with mirth the drowsy ear of Night."

It is not hard to guess that Harold spells Byron, and a ver young Byron at that, for no fool but a young fool wishes t parade the superfluity of his naughtiness before the world. How ever, it must be said, in justice to Byron, that his Harold is n a profligate; he is but

> "The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind,"

a man aweary of the world, and desirous of letting the worl know that his is a dark and gloomy soul. Otherwise the cha acter of Harold is not sharply defined, nor does he play a prom nent part in the poem. His story is but the thread upon whic are strung a series of descriptions and reflections.

"Oh, lovely Spain!" is the first country visited by our wa derer. The second canto touches upon some of the islands the Mediterranean, and then dwells upon

> "Fair Greece! sad relic of departed worth!
> Immortal, though no more; though fallen, great!"

These reverential lines have a tender significance when we remember that this early feeling of Byron's is one with the later generosity that led him to sacrifice his life for Greece.

Good as the first and second cantos are, they are completely surpassed by the third and fourth. Says Mr. Nichol:

"Had Lord Byron's public career closed when he left England, he would have been remembered for a generation as the author of some musical minor verses, a clever satire, a journal in verse exhibiting flashes of genius, and a series of fascinating romances — also giving promise of higher power — which had enjoyed a marvellous popularity. The third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold* placed him on another platform, that of the *Dii Majores* of English verse. These cantos are separated from their predecessors, not by a stage, but by a gulf."

In the third canto we find ourselves on the field of Waterloo. The high-water mark of Byron's descriptive power is here attained. It is well to remember that the poet is here touching upon contemporary history. When these lines were written the echoes of Waterloo were still reverberating through Europe; Napoleon was still living. To write great poetry about contemporary events is one of the most precarious and difficult of tasks.

"There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gathered then
Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell."

From Waterloo we turn to reflections on Napoleon, descriptions of the Rhine, "the castled crag of Drachenfels," to Coblentz, Ehrenbreitstein, Lake Leman, where the poet pauses to pay his tribute to Rousseau. Every charming scene has its notability to whom tribute is given. For

the stability of the book depends on its being a Temple of Fame, as well as a Diorama of Scenery. It is no mere versified guide, because every

resting-place in the pilgrimage is made interesting by association wit illustrious memories. Coblentz introduces the tribute to Marceau; Claren an almost complete review, in five verses, of Rousseau; Lausanne an Ferney, the quintessence of criticism of Gibbon and Voltaire; a tomb i Arqua suggests Petrarch; the grass-grown streets of Ferrara lead to th lines on Tasso; the white walls of the Etrurian Athens brings back Alfie and Michael Angelo, and the prose bard of the hundred tales, and Dante.

It is in this third canto that Byron reveals himself in hi tenderer moods, in a certain simplicity of self-revelation brough about by the contemplation of nature. The stanzas now to b quoted show the range of Byron's descriptive power, passin from the depiction of the melancholy charm of the dying da to the awfulness of the storm on the Alps.

"It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
Mellowed and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
Save darkened Jura, whose capt heights appear
Precipitously steep; and, drawing near,
There breathes a living fragrance from the shore,
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more."

. . . . . .

"The sky is changed! — and such a change! Oh night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
Leaps the wild thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!"

A study of these lines might reveal the qualities that hav made Byron the popular poet of that inexplicable somethin known as "the average man."

The fourth canto begins with the oft-repeated

"I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each hand,"

ıd devotes itself to the celebration of the glories of Italy — orence, the "woody Apennine," and Rome,

> "The Niobe of Nations! there she stands,
> Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe:
> An empty urn within her withered hands."

celebrated Englishman said that every time he went to Rome prepared himself to enter into the spirit of the imperial city by ading Hawthorne's *Marble Faun.* It and *Childe Harold* have ught the spirit of the place. It is probable that more travelers ho have stood within the massive shadows of the Colosseum ıve thought of Byron than of Hawthorne. "The voice of arius," says Scott, "could not sound more deep and solemn nong the ruins of Carthage, than the strains of the pilgrim nong the broken shrines and fallen statues of her subduers!"

No passage in *Childe Harold* has been more admired than e lines referring to the dying gladiator:

> "I see before me the Gladiator lie;
> He leans upon his hand — his manly brow
> Consents to death, but conquers agony,
> And his drooped head sinks gradually low —
> And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
> From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
> Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
> The arena swims around him — he is gone,
> Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who won.
>
> "He heard it, but he heeded not — his eyes
> Were with his heart, and that was far away;
> He recked not of the life he lost, nor prize,
> But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
> *There* were his young barbarians all at play,
> *There* was their Dacian mother — he, their sire,
> Butchered to make a Roman holiday —
> All this rushed with his blood — Shall he expire
> And unavenged? Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!"

Don Juan. — By many this poem is considered Byron's master- ece. It is one of the longest poems in the English language,

consisting of sixteen cantos of 1,970 stanzas of eight lines each. The poem was not given to the public as a whole, for its composition extended over a long period of Byron's short life. "Begun at Venice, Sept. 6; finished Nov. 1, 1818," wrote Byron himself.

But this refers only to the first two cantos. Upon the publication there was a storm of criticism. The poem shocked the British public by its blasphemy and indelicacy. Byron was sensitive; the criticism annoyed him to such an extent that he discontinued his poetic composition. However, by fits and starts he took up the story of the poem, and in August, 1821, Cantos III, IV, and V were published. Up to this time the author's name was not attached to the poem, but the public attributed the work to Byron. The last cantos appeared in March, 1824, the year of Byron's death.

Don Juan is the story of the adventures of a young man whose name, Don Juan, the public imagined to be a thin disguise to cover the intrigues and reflections of Byron himself. Don Juan is a young Spaniard whose escapades carry him from Spain to Russia, from the land of the Turks to the home of the English. He is handsome and fascinating, not vicious, perhaps not immoral, but rather like Falstaff, *unmoral*. He has intrigues in all lands and with all classes, from Haidee, the most beautiful of Byron's creations, to Catharine of Russia.

In plot *Don Juan* is as structureless as the *Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer, with the exception that in the *Canterbury Tales* there are a number of unrelated stories, whereas in *Don Juan* there is a sort of unity dependent upon the adventures of a single hero. The episodes are separate and distinct. Long as the poem is, there was nothing in its organic structure to prevent it from going on indefinitely. This looseness of structure gave Byron a great opportunity to indulge the versatility of his genius, and so we find narration and description, sentiment and romance, satire and an occasional bit of philosophy.

> "I rattle on exactly as I talk
> With anybody in a ride or walk.

"I don't know that there may be much ability
Shown in this sort of desultory rhyme;
But there's a conversational facility,
Which may round off an hour upon a time."*

contrast with this colloquialism we may turn to the first canto id find stanzas that were not rattled off just as one talks. No nes of the poem are possibly more familiar than these:

"'Tis sweet to hear
At midnight on the blue and moonlit deep
The song and oar of Adria's gondolier,
By distance mellowed, o'er the waters sweep;
'Tis sweet to see the evening star appear;
'Tis sweet to listen as the night-winds creep
From leaf to leaf; 'tis sweet to view on high
The rainbow, based on ocean, span the sky.

"'Tis sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest bark
Bay deep-mouthed welcome as we draw near home;
'Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark
Our coming and look brighter when we come;
'Tis sweet to be awakened by the lark,
Or lulled by falling waters; sweet the hum
Of bees, the voice of girls, the song of birds,
The lisp of children, and their earliest words.

"'Tis sweet to win, no matter how, one's laurels,
By blood or ink; 'tis sweet to put an end
To strife; 'tis sometimes sweet to have our quarrels,
Particularly with a tiresome friend;
Sweet is old wine in bottles, ale in barrels;
Dear is the helpless creature we defend
Against the world; and dear the schoolboy spot
We ne'er forget, though there we are forgot."

To call a poem dull is to damn it, not with faint praise, but th the one criticism that consigns it to the dusty shelves of used libraries; to call it immoral is apt to give it an undeserved publicity. It is hardly fair to say that the fame of *Don an* is the fame of an immoral book; there is too much of wit,

* Canto XV.

too much of brilliant satire on the foibles of society, too true an indictment of the hypocrisy of the self-righteous England of Byron's day, too much that is fine in description and narration to consign the poem to the class of those productions whose only merit is their salaciousness. But yet one has the feeling that much of the fame of *Don Juan* rests upon its nearness to the dangerous edge of things. From the day of its appearance the English and American public have resented the moral laxity of the poem. In America in 1823 the poem was characterized as "a terrible poem for youthful readers," the work of a "titled profligate" and "licentious bard." This, however, was not the universal opinion, for the *North American Review* considered *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan* "masterpieces respectively of the serious and comic order." It is significant, on the other hand, that even in Italy, where the morality of Puritan England did not prevail, the women of literary judgment preferred *Childe Harold* to *Don Juan*. "What do you think a very pretty Italian lady said to me the other day," writes Byron to Murray, "when I remarked that it would live longer than *Childe Harold?* 'Ah, but I would rather have the fame of *Childe Harold* for three years than an immortality of *D. J.*'"

Cain.—Some critics think Byron touched the high-water mark of his genius in the writing of *Cain,* a dramatic poem in three acts. This poem was begun at Ravenna, on the 16th of July, 1821, and completed (without the chorus) on the 9th of September. The poem was dedicated to Sir Walter Scott, one of the few living literary men whom Byron admired. Scott wrote an acceptance of the honor to Murray, the publisher. In his letter we read:

> "I may be partial to it, and you will allow I have cause; but I do not know that his Muse has ever taken so lofty a flight amid her former soarings. He has certainly matched Milton on his own ground. Some part of the language is bold, and may shock one class of readers. . . . But then they must condemn the *Paradise Lost,* if they have a mind to be consistent."

Shelley wrote to a friend:

"What think you of Lord Byron's last volume? In my opinion it contains finer poetry than has appeared in England since the publication of *Paradise Regained*. *Cain* is apocalyptic; it is a revelation not before communicated to man."

Although at present the critics are inclined to believe that *Cain* is a great dramatic poem, this was not the prevalent opinion at the time of its publication. Such a storm of hostile criticism arose that Murray was threatened with prosecution. Mr. Jeffrey writes that he regrets very much that it has been published. Bishop Heber declares that there is neither much vigor nor poetical propriety in the poem; that Adam moralizes without dignity; that Abel is as dull as he is pious.

What irritated Byron especially was the tendency of some readers to confuse the thoughts of his characters with the thoughts of the author. This is a common fault with the uncritical. They say that Shakspere thinks thus and thus, that Byron believes this, and that the Bible says that all a man hath will he give for his life. If this method of deducing what a dramatic writer actually thinks be permitted, then Shakspere can be charged with all the crimes of all his villains, for a dramatic writer, if charged with responsibility for the opinions of his characters, must also be held responsible for their acts.

Other Poems.—In addition to the poems we have already mentioned, there were many other poems from the pen of the prolific Byron. Some of these were—*The Vision of Judgment, The Giaour, The Bride of Abydos, The Corsair, Lara, The Siege of Corinth, Mazeppa, Manfred, Marino Faliero, The Two Foscari,* and *The Deformed Transformed.* Some are in narrative, others in dramatic form. Of the dramatic, *Manfred* is, perhaps, the most noted. In *Manfred* there are resemblances to *Faust,* but this does not mean that Byron copied Goethe's idea, for Byron did not have a first-hand knowledge of *Faust.* Goethe himself wrote very admiringly of *Manfred,* saying, "Byron's tragedy, *Manfred,* was to me a wonderful phenomenon, and one that closely touched me." Even a great critic like Goethe may be carried away by a temporary enthusiasm, as is illustrated by his

thinking that Hamlet's soliloquy has been surpassed by the one in *Manfred* beginning thus:

> "We are the fools of time and terror: Days
> Steal on us and steal from us; yet we live,
> Loathing our life, and dreading still to die.
> In all the days of this detested yoke—
> This vital weight upon the struggling heart,
> Which sinks with sorrow, or beats quick with pain,
> Or joy that ends in agony or faintness—
> In all the days of past and future, for
> In life there is no present, we can number
> How few—how less than few—wherein the soul
> Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws back
> As from a stream in winter, though the chill
> Be but a moment's."

Byron and Wordsworth. These two poets are considered by Matthew Arnold as the two greatest forces in the poetry of the nineteenth century. In making this rating, Arnold is comparing their influence with that of Keats, Shelley, and Coleridge. If he were writing now, the names of Browning and Tennyson would require careful weighing in making such a comparison. For Tennyson and Browning are also a "glorious pair, among the poets of this century." Arnold is a fair and wise critic, and we must pay respect to his judgment. The greatest of German poets, Goethe, gave expression to the highest appreciation of Byron's poetic ability, writing of him as "a personality, in eminence such as has never been yet and is not likely to come again." It is also known that Byron has proved a regenerative force upon the literature of modern Germany, France, Italy, and Spain. No English poet, save Shakspere, is so widely read and admired in Europe as Byron. One explanation of his immense vogue among foreign peoples is that his poetry is simple and direct, containing no subtleties, and therefore lending itself readily to translation; another, that his revolutionary, defiant, destructive spirit appeals to peoples whose hatred of tyranny and conventional despotism finds free and full expression in the iconoclasm of Byron's verse.

Byron is a great name in literature, but not one of the few reatest; and that not because he lacks artistic finish and broad cholarship. Shakspere was not a scholar, and much of his oetry lacks artistic finish. A great poet to be enrolled among ne select few must have an adequate philosophy of life; he nust be a thinker. Great as was Goethe's admiration for Byron, e says that when Byron reflects he is a child. Byron had never he patience and ability to think his way through his doubtings nd discontents to the clear light of day. Shakspere, Chaucer, nd Browning have a wholesome philosophy of life. Byron is oo cynical, too vehement, too destructive; he sees life in fragnents only. While we admire the noble eloquence that dignifies is stately verse, and the scorn with which he lashes the hypocrisy f his age, we resent the flippancy with which he treats the most acred of feelings, and the blasphemy with which he shocks our eligious sense.

A Friend's Estimate.—The following account was written y Colonel Leicester Stanhope, a friend of Byron's, who often ngaged in discussion with his distinguished poet-friend. The alue of this account, written shortly after the death of Byron, s enhanced by the approval given it by Hobhouse, a man who new Byron intimately.

"There were two circumstances which appear to me to have had a owerful influence on Byron's conduct. I allude to his lameness and his arriage. The deformity of his foot constantly preyed on his spirits and oured his temper. It is extraordinary, however, and contrary, I believe, o the conduct of the generality of lame persons, that he pitied, sympaized with and befriended those who laboured under similar defects.

. . . . . .

"Lord Byron's mental and personal courage was unlike that of other en. To the superficial observer his conduct seemed to be quite unsettled; his was really the case to a certain extent. His genius was boundless and ccursive, and in conversation his tongue went rioting on

"'From grave to gay, from lively to severe.'

"Still upon the whole, no man was more constant, and, I may almost y, more obstinate in the pursuit of some great objects. For example, in eligion and politics he seemed firm as a rock. . . .

"The assertions I have ventured to make of Lord Byron having fixed opinions on certain material questions are not according to his own judgment. From what fell from his own lips, I could draw no such conclusions, for, in conversing with me on government and religion, and after going widely over these subjects, sometimes in a grave and philosophical, and sometimes in laughing and humorous strain, he would say, 'The more I think, the more I doubt; I am a perfect skeptic.' In contradiction to this assertion, I set Lord Byron's recorded sentiments, and his actions from the period of his boyhood to that of his death; and I contend that although he occasionally veered about, yet he always returned to certain fixed opinions; and that he felt a constant attachment to liberty, according to our notions of liberty, and that although no Christian, he was a firm believer in the existence of a God. It is, therefore, equally remote from truth to represent him as either an atheist or a Christian.

. . . . . .

"Most persons assume a virtuous character. Lord Byron's ambition, on the contrary, was to make the world imagine that he was a sort of 'Satan,' though occasionally influenced by lofty sentiments to the performance of great actions. Fortunately for his fame, he possessed another quality, by which he stood completely unmasked. He was the most ingenuous of men, and his nature, in the main good, always triumphed over his acting.

"There was nothing he detested more than to be thought merely a great poet, though he did not wish to be esteemed inferior as a dramatist to Shakspere. Like Voltaire, he was unconsciously jealous of, and for that reason abused, our immortal bard. His mind was absorbed in detecting Shakspere's glaring defects, instead of being overpowered by his wonderful creative and redeeming genius.

. . . . . .

"As a companion, no one could be more amusing; he had neither pedantry nor affectation about him, but was natural and playful as a boy. His conversation resembled a stream, sometimes smooth, sometimes rapid, and sometimes rushing down in cataracts; it was a mixture of philosophy and slang — of everything — like his Don Juan. He was a patient, and, in general, a very attentive listener. When, however, he did engage with earnestness in conversation, his ideas succeeded each other with such uncommon rapidity that he could not control them. They burst from him impetuously; and although he both attended to and noticed the remarks of others, yet he did not allow these to check his discourse for an instant.

. . . . . .

"Lord Byron's reading was desultory, but extensive; his memory was retentive to an extraordinary extent. He was partial to the Italian poets,

ıd is said to have borrowed from them. Their fine thoughts he certainly ssociated with his own, but with such skill that he could not be accused f plagiarism. Lord Byron possessed, indeed, a genius absolutely bound-ss, and could create with such facility that it would have been irksome) him to have become a servile imitator. He was original in all things, ıt especially as a poet."

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CHAPTER XI

Shelley

SHELLEY is one of the most interesting and fascinating characters in the history of English literature. His story reads like a romance; his early death and the tragic manner of it add pathos to a life which with all its simplicity presents a puzzling confusion of good and evil.

Boyhood.—Percy Bysshe Shelley was born at Field Place Sussex, a quiet country place, on August 4, 1792. Percy was a family name, and he was called Bysshe in honor of his grandfather. The family was in prosperous circumstances, living the comfortable life of the English aristocracy. The father was a plain, beef-loving, sturdy Englishman, who at first took pride in the achievements of his bright son, but who soon was deeply offended by Percy's deviations from the standards of society. The mother was a woman in no wise remarkable. Shelley is another illustration that genius is a miracle beyond explanation by heredity. He spent his childhood in the companionship of four sisters, who doubtless greatly admired the brother, who was sympathetic and entertaining. His brother, John, born in 1806, was too young to afford much companionship. Shelley, like Ruskin, missed the training that comes from the rough-and-tumble games of boys.

Education.—At six years of age Shelley studied under a Welsh parson; at ten he entered Sion House Academy, where about fifty boys studied Latin, Greek, French, writing, arithmetic, geography, and the elements of astronomy. At this time Shelley was

"slight of figure, with a well-set head, on which abundant locks, now of a rich brown hue, curled naturally; his complexion was fair and ruddy like a girl's. The luminous, large blue eyes had at one time a dreamy softness, at another a fixed wild beauty . . . the expression of his countenance was one of exceeding sweetness and innocence."

he young boy was not particularly studious, but he was a great ader, especially fond of tales of the marvelous. He preferred e unreal romances of Anne Radcliffe to the sturdier fiction of ielding or Smollett.

We next find him in the famous school, Eton, one of the -called public schools of England; called *public* because, by a *cus a non lucendo,* it is very exclusive. Eton is just across om the famous and beautiful castle of Windsor. Shelley ıtered this school in 1804. His life here was not a happy one. t Sion House he was known as a "strange, unsocial fellow;" Eton his reputation remained unchanged. The young school- oy is not far removed from savagery; the gentle emotions of mpathy and pity have not yet developed through suffering; in s play he is a young barbarian, taking delight in bullying the ensitive. Shelley was an interesting victim. Writes a school- llow:

I have seen him surrounded, hooted, baited like a maddened bull, and this distance of time I seem to hear ringing in my ears the cry which helley was wont to utter in his paroxysm of revengeful anger. In rk and miry winter evenings it was the practice to assemble under the oisters previous to mounting to the Upper School. To surround 'Mad helley' and 'nail' him with a ball slimy with mud was a favorite pastime; his name would suddenly be sounded through the cloisters, in an stant to be taken up by another and another voice, until hundreds joined e clamor, and the roof would echo and re-echo with 'Shelley! Shelley! helley!' than a space would be opened, in which, as in a ring or alley, e victim must stand and exhibit his torture; or some urchin would dart behind and by one dexterous push scatter at Shelley's feet the books hich he had held under his arm; or mischievous hands would pluck at s garments; or a hundred fingers would point at him from every side, hile still the outcry, 'Shelley! Shelley!' rang against the walls. An cess of passion — the desired result — would follow, which, declares a tness of these persecutions, 'made his eyes flash like a tiger's, his cheeks ow pale as death, his limbs quiver.'"

Scenes such as this picture an unusual, sensitive, almost normal child. If the child is father to the man, we may expect find the grown-up Shelley in a world of trouble. However, e must not conclude that all the days of Shelley at Eton were

days of misery. We may also think of him as wandering among the old trees of the forest at Windsor, of spending an occasional hour at Stoke Pogis, a place associated with Gray's *Elegy,* of performing new experiments in the sciences, and of forming few friendships with boys of kindred interests. There were those who liked the shy boy. "I always liked him," says Mr. Packe, "he was such a good, generous, open-hearted fellow." And Mr. Halliday, another companion of his schooldays, writes,

"I was myself far too young to form an estimate of character, but I loved Shelley for his kindliness and affectionate ways; he was not made to endure the rough and boisterous pastimes at Eton, and his shy and gentle nature was glad to escape far away to muse over strange fancies. . . . He had great moral courage, and feared nothing but what was base and false and low."

Years afterwards, when in Italy, recalling his early youth with that charm that memory casts over distant days, Shelley wrote of the Eton days:

"Those bottles of warm tea—
(Give me some straw)—must be stowed tenderly;
Such as we used, in summer after six,
To cram in great-coat pockets, and to mix
Hard eggs and radishes and roll at Eton,
And, couched on stolen hay in those green harbors
Farmers called gaps, and we schoolboys called arbors,
Would feast till eight."

As a student Shelley was not especially distinguished during his schooldays, although one of his friends, Halliday, declares his lessons "were child's play to him." Like many men of genius, he gained more from his miscellaneous readings than from the prescribed course. He read much in Pliny and Lucretius, and already was influenced by the sophistries of Godwin's *Political Justice,* a work that had decided influence in leading Shelley into wrong thinking. He was also deeply interested in making experiments in science, a subject of which much was expected, but not so much as really has been since accomplished. Among other apparatus, he possessed a galvanic battery.

"One day Mr. Bethell (one of Shelley's uninspired tutors), suspecting from strange noises overhead that his pupil was engaging in nefarious scientific pursuits, suddenly appeared in Shelley's room; to his consternation he found the culprit apparently enveloped in a blue flame. 'What on earth are you doing, Shelley?' 'Please, sir,' came the answer in the quietest tone, 'I am raising the devil.' 'And what in the world is this?' resumed the pedagogue, seizing hold of some mysterious-looking apparatus on the table. In an instant the intruder was thrown back — Bethell the magnificent — against the wall, having undesignedly exhibited a very pretty electrical experiment, and received an unstinted discharge. It is said the experiment did not advance Shelley in his tutor's good graces."

These anecdotes of his boyhood days reveal but little of the real Shelley. No full records of those days were kept, for no one expected the slender, shy boy to become a leader in song and thought. That the schoolboy brooded much on the meaning of things, that he lived a life hidden from his companions, that he had moments of exaltation, can be traced in the autobiographical fragments of his poetry. In his *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* we find this record of an inspiring moment:

"While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave, and ruin,
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed,
I was not heard — I saw them not —
When musing deeply on the lot
Of life, at the sweet time when winds are wooing
All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming —
Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!

"I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine — have I not kept the vow?"

At Oxford. — In 1810 Shelley went from Eton, the famous public school, to Oxford, the still more famous university. He matriculated in University College on April 10, and then returned to Eton. The summer he spent at home, taking pleasure in hunting. In the fall he returned to Oxford to enter upon university

residence. "My son here," said the father, Timothy Shelley, t a book-seller acquaintance whom father and son were callin upon, "my son here has a literary turn; he is already an autho and do, pray, indulge him in his literary freaks."

The atmosphere at Oxford was not especially stimulating the great University living upon the traditions of the past Shelley was looking to the future. To Thomas Jefferson Hog we are indebted for a description of Shelley's appearance an manner of life while spending his few months at Oxford:

"At the commencement of Michaelmas Term, that is, at the end o October in the year 1810, I happened one day to sit next a freshman a dinner; it was his first appearance in hall. His figure was slight, an his aspect remarkably youthful, even at our table, where all were ver young. He seemed thoughtful and absent. He ate little, and had n acquaintance with anyone."

Hogg and Shelley soon were engaged in a violent argumen on the relative merits and demerits of German and Italian litera ture. Shelley insisted on the preeminence of the German schoo of literature and Hogg on the excellence of the Italian. Th ending of the argument is a true touch of human nature. The had, on invitation of Hogg, gone to Hogg's rooms to continu the argument.

". . . Whilst I was lighting the candles, he said calmly, and to m great surprise, that he was not qualified to maintain such a discussion, fo he was alike ignorant of Italian and German, and had only the works o the Germans in translations, and but little of Italian poetry, even at second hand. For my part, I confessed, with an equal ingenuousness, that I knev nothing of German, and but little of Italian; that I had spoken onl through others, and, like him, had hitherto seen by the glimmering ligh of translations."

Shelley's residence at Oxford came to an abrupt termination On March 2, 1811, he wrote to Leigh Hunt, who was then th radical editor of *The Examiner:* "On account of the respon sibility to which my residence in this university subjects me, I of course, dare not publicly avow all that I think." Within a

nth after he had written these words he was expelled from
xford for having written a tract, *The Necessity of Atheism.*
is tract had a short-lived sale, for it was but twenty minutes
er having been placed on sale that the startling title attracted
e attention of a disapproving university Fellow. Hogg has
en us a lively description of the events leading up to the
pulsion not only of Shelley but also of himself for their refusal
answer certain questions put by the college authorities and for
clining to disavow the ideas of the atheistic tract.

Marriage. — A man's university education is supposed to give
n knowledge of the past; his marriage to make him a con-
vative member of the social order of the present. Shelley
s unfortunate both in regard to his university experience and
marriage. He left the university embittered against the
spotism and narrowness of the academic world; he married a
tty girl of sixteen because he thought he ought to rescue her
m the stern oppression of a hard father — whose oppression
l hardness seem to have consisted of the natural paternal
ire that the daughter go to school, the proper place, one
uld suppose, for a sixteen year old girl. Harriet Westbrook
l many charming qualities: she was young, pretty, "with a
nplexion brilliant in pink and white, with hair quite like a
t's dream, and Bysshe's peculiar admiration." She was sweet,
iable and attractive, but she had neither the force of character
the brilliancy of intellect to hold the affection of Shelley.
must be confessed that it is doubtful whether any woman
ld have satisfied the heart of this dreamy and passionate
ker after intellectual and spiritual beauty, "the awful shadow
some unseen power."

The whole story of the separation of Harriet and Shelley is a
one. Mr. Dowden, in his entertaining *Life of Shelley,* may
ce the conduct of the poet in too favorable a light; Mark
ain in his defence of Harriet may err on the side of severity.
seems impossible to reach the ultimate facts needed to explain
elley's conduct. However, we dare not let our admiration
l sympathy for genius cause us to set up a new standard of

righteousness and justice. Harriet may have been commonpla she may even have been indiscreet and foolish, but she w Shelley's wife and the mother of his child. She may have be even weak and unconventional, but Shelley should have reme bered that he had done more than any one else to convert h from the conventional religious and social ideals of her ea education. She was but a child when he married her, a whether the marriage was the result of a mistaken and Quixo chivalry or of youthful love, he should have continued chivalro even if not loving, to the end. This he failed to do.

On the 28th of July, 1814, Shelley and Mary Godwin, acco panied by Jane Clairmont, ran away together to the Contine On November 9, 1816, Harriet committed suicide, and then December 30, 1816, Shelley and Mary were legally married. fairness to Shelley it must be added that Harriet's suicide w not caused directly by his conduct. Mr. Thornton Hunt h said that there was nothing culpable in Harriet's conjugal co duct before the separation,

"but subsequently she forfeited her claim to a return, even in the of the law. If she left (Shelley), it would appear that she herself w deserted in turn by a man in a very humble grade of life, and it was consequence of this desertion that she killed herself."

Mary Godwin and Shelley.—The Godwin family was unusual mixture, a family in which it is no simple matter remember the exact relationship of the children. Godwin's fi wife had been Mary Wollstonecraft, a brilliant woman who h lived, without marriage, with a Mr. Imlay. When she gave h hand in marriage to Godwin she brought with her a child, Fan known as Fanny Godwin. Their own child was Mary Godw When Godwin married a second time, after the death of his fi wife, he married a widow, Mrs. Clairmont, who brought in the family the two Clairmont children, Charles and Jane. Th there was also William, the son of Godwin and his second wi Mrs. Clairmont-Godwin.

Godwin himself was a man well-known in the literary wor

s *Caleb Williams* was a popular novel, and his *Political Justice* d a wide influence. In his own day his fame was greater ın it is now. Writing of Godwin's *Life of Chaucer* Lounsbury ys:

"Godwin was always ready to tell what he did not know, to describe at he had not seen, and to explain what he did not understand. God- ı's life of the poet may indeed be declared to deserve the distinction being the most worthless piece of biography in the English language."

His *Political Justice* had, unfortunately, a great influence on e immature thinking of Shelley. Godwin's ideas on religion, ciety, morals, and marriage were revolutionary. When Shelley t into practice some of these ideas and ran away with the former's young daughter, the theorist was very indignant. It ıs one thing to theorize about absolute liberty, it was quite other to have such ideas illustrated by the conduct of his own ughter. The philosopher was highly offended and shut the or in the face of his ardent disciple.

In Italy.—Shelley's ideas and conduct did not recommend n to the English public. The law had declared him an im- oper person to have charge of his own children. Partly because his unpopularity, and partly because of the appeal that Italy s always made to the artistic temperament, Shelley with his nily left England for Italy on March 11, 1818, never to urn. The withdrawal to Italy was a happy move, for in that nny land Shelley passed the happiest years of his troubled e, and also did his best literary work. Shelley was of a roving position; in Italy he lived for brief spaces at Leghorn, Este, me, Naples, and Pisa. In 1822 we find him and his family ing in a house also occupied by the Williams' on the shore of Bay of Spezzia. Both Shelley and Mr. Williams were very ıd of boating. They made frequent sailing trips in a boat y owned, a sailing vessel twenty-eight feet long and eight t wide. In this boat they sailed to Pisa to meet Leigh Hunt, o had come to Italy to edit the *Liberal*. Having spent several ys with Hunt, Byron, and other friends, they left Pisa for

home on July 8. Soon after they set sail a fierce storm aros They were never again seen alive. Days afterwards the bodi were found washed up on the beach. Shelley's body was cr mated and the ashes placed in the Protestant Cemetery at Rom near the grave of his fellow poet whom he had so beautiful celebrated in *Adonais,* an elegy ranking with the *Lycidas* Milton and the *In Memoriam* of Tennyson.

Trelawney's First Impression. — The most interesting accou of the last days of Shelley is that given by Trelawney in h *Recollections.* In the third chapter he gives us this lively accou of his first glimpse of the poet:

"I drove to Pisa alone. I arrived late, and after putting up m horse at the inn and dining, hastened to the Tre Palazzi, on the Lun Arno, where the Shelleys and Williams' lived on different flats under t same roof, as is the custom on the Continent. The Williams' received m in their earnest cordial manner; we had a great deal to communicate each other, and were in loud and animated conversation, when I w rather put out by observing in the passage near the open door, opposi to where I sat, a pair of glittering eyes steadily fixed on mine; it was t dark to make out whom they belonged to. With the acuteness of woman, Mrs. Williams's eyes followed the direction of mine, and goi to the doorway, she laughingly said, 'Come in, Shelley, it's only o friend Tre just arrived.'

"Swiftly gliding in, blushing like a girl, a tall thin stripling held o both his hands; and although I could hardly believe as I looked at h flushed, feminine, and artless face that it could be the Poet, I return his warm pressure. After the ordinary greetings and courtesies he s down and listened. I was silent from astonishment: was it possible th mild-looking, beardless boy, could be the veritable monster at war with the world? — excommunicated by the Fathers of the Church, deprived his civil rights by the fiat of a grim Lord Chancellor, discarded by eve member of his family, and denounced by the rival sages of our literatu as the founder of a Satanic School? I could not believe it; it must be hoax. He was habited like a boy, in a black jacket and trowsers, whi he seemed to have outgrown."

In this connection it is interesting to note Trelawney's descri tion after Shelley had died:

"Shelley came of a long-lived race, and, barring accidents, there no reason why he should not have emulated his forefathers in attaini

ripe age. . . . He was tall, slim, and bent from eternally poring over ooks; this habit had contracted his chest. His limbs were well proporoned, strong, and bony — his head was very small — and his features ere expressive of great sensibility, and decidedly feminine. There was othing about him outwardly to attract notice, except his extraordinary outhful appearance. At twenty-nine, he still retained on his tanned and reckled cheeks, the fresh look of a boy — although his long wild locks ere coming into blossom, as a polite hairdresser once said to me, whilst utting mine.

"It was not until he spoke that you could discern anything uncommon n him — but the first sentence he uttered, when excited by his subject, iveted your attention. The light from his very soul streamed from his yes, and every mental emotion of which the human mind is susceptible, vas expressed in his pliant and ever-changing features. He left the conviction on the minds of his audience, that however great he was as a poet, e was greater as an orator. There was another and most rare peculirity in Shelley — his intellectual faculties completely mastered his material nature, and hence he unhesitatingly acted up to his own theories, if ney only demanded sacrifices on his part; it was where they implicated thers that he forbore. Mrs. Shelley has observed, 'Many have suggested nd advocated far greater innovations in our political and social systems nan Shelley; but he alone practised those he approved of as just.'"

Queen Mab. — Queen Mab is a poem of nine sections; it can e read carefully in three or four hours. Written when the oet was but a boy, it is, of course, immature, though a remarkble production for a youth of eighteen. Shelley had the good ense not to publish *Queen Mab;* it was privately circulated. Vhen in later years Shelley heard that a surreptitious publication f the poem had been made in London, he wrote a letter to the ditor of *The Examiner.* In this letter he declares:

"I am a devoted enemy to religious, political, and domestic oppreson; and I regret this publication, not so much from literary vanity as ecause I fear it is better fitted to injure than to serve the sacred cause f freedom."

Society is rightfully conservative; it refuses to throw aside ne traditions of the past upon the mere promises of a revoluonary theorist. The two topics that society insists shall be andled with care are marriage and religion. To run counter to

the conventions of society on either topic is to court opposition and denunciation. Shelley was a radical on both topics.

The poem itself is not so startlingly offensive as the explanatory notes written by Shelley himself. In the poem we read:

> "They have three words (well tyrants know their use,
> Well pay them for the loan, with usury
> Torn from a bleeding world) — God, Hell, and Heaven.
> A vengeful, pitiless, and almighty fiend,
> Whose mercy is a nickname for the rage
> Of tameless tigers hungering for blood:
> Hell, a red gulf of everlasting fire,
> Where poisonous and undying worms prolong
> Eternal misery to those helpless slaves
> Whose life has been a penance for its crimes:
> And Heaven, a meed for those who dare belie
> Their human nature, quake, believe, and cringe
> Before the mockeries of earthly power."

Nowadays when we are accustomed to a great variety of opinion on theological matters, such lines coming from a boy of eighteen would not create a ripple on the broad sea of thought. Shelley here is not objecting to the abstract idea of God, he is finding fault with what he conceives to be the ideas of his contemporaries. Even in his notes to *Queen Mab,* where he attempts to prove that there is no God, he wishes to be understood as believing in "a pervading Spirit, co-eternal with the universe."

And what of his ideas on marriage? Here we have ideas that would turn our social world topsy-turvy. In his notes we read:

> "Love is inevitably consequent upon the perception of loveliness. Love withers under constraint: its very essence is liberty. . . . A husband and wife ought to continue so long united as they love each other: any law which should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection would be a most intolerable tyranny, and the most unworthy of toleration. . . . A system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage."

This is the immature and revolutionary notion of a young boy whose philosophy of life is like Ephraim "a cake not turned."

is well to remember that ten years after the writing of *Queen ab* Shelley was tamely submitting to the matrimonial yoke; also at he had grown away from his early crude theories.

The Revolt of Islam. — This is a long poem of twelve cantos 525 Spenserian stanzas, including the introduction addressed Mary. The title of the poem originally was *Laon and Cythna.* Written in the summer and early fall of 1817, the poem was ublished about Christmas of the same year. After a few copies ad been issued, the publisher, becoming alarmed at some of the daacities of the poem, insisted on a change in some of the lines. he changes, affecting about 55 lines in all, were reluctantly ade by Shelley. Of this poem W. M. Rossetti writes:

"It was a great effort, and a near approach to a great poem. . . . orgeous ideality, humanitarian enthusiasm, and a passionate rush of vention, more especially of the horrible, go hand in hand in the *Revolt Islam.* . . . Its flashing and sounding chambers are full of everything ve what one most loves at last, repose and companionship."

the preface Shelley writes of his purpose:

"I have sought to enlist the harmony of metrical language, . . . in e cause of a liberal and comprehensive morality."

nd in a letter written from Marlow, December 11, 1817, he rites,

"The poem was produced by a series of thoughts which filled my nd with unbounded and sustained enthusiasm. I felt the precariousness my life, and I engaged in this task, resolved to leave some record of rself."

Julian and Maddalo. — This is a narrative poem of about 600 nes in which *Julian* is supposed to be Shelley, and *Maddalo,* yron. In the prose preface Maddalo is described as a

Venetian nobleman of ancient family and of great fortune. . . . He is erson of the most consummate genius. . . . But it is his weakness to be oud. Julian is an Englishman of good family, passionately attached to ose philosophical notions which assert the power of man over his own nd. . . . Without concealing the evil in the world, he is forever specu- ing how good may be made superior. Julian, in spite of his heterodox nions, is conjectured by his friends to possess some good qualities."

Julian and Maddalo is written in a familiar, conversationa style. Shelley himself never thought very highly of the poem but in reading it one has the feeling that had some of its sim plicity, directness, and concreteness been imparted to poems lik *Prometheus Unbound,* there would have been a distinct gain, t the ordinary reader at least. The following passage, likely refer ring to Allegra,* the child of Byron and Jane Clairmont, is good illustration of the style of the poem:

> "The following morn was rainy, cold, and dim.
> Ere Maddalo arose I called on him;
> And, whilst I waited, with his child I played.
> A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made;
> A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being;
> Graceful without design; and unforeseeing;
> With eyes — oh speak not of her eyes! which seem
> Twin mirrors of Italian heaven, yet gleam
> With such deep meaning as we never see
> But in the human countenance. With me
> She was a special favorite: I had nursed
> Her fine and feeble limbs when she came first
> To this bleak world; and she yet seemed to know
> On second sight her ancient playfellow,
> Less changed than she was by six months or so.
> For, after her first shyness was worn out,
> We sate there, rolling billiard-balls about —
> When the Count entered."

Shelley greatly admired Byron, who at this time was by fa the more distinguished poet. Shelley, however, had too muc independence of mind to become a mere imitator of Byron, an too great refinement and delicacy of feeling not to be pained b the vulgar excesses of his friend. Byron had great respect fo Shelley, both as a man and as a poet, and was influenced, it i likely, more by Shelley than was Shelley by him. Byron ha admiration for only two of his contemporaries — Scott, whon he called Watty, and Shelley. One evening while Byron wa

* See *The Atlantic Monthly,* April, 1902, for an article on Allegra b Agnes Repplier.

peaking to Lady Blessington at Genoa, he pointed out a boat in he harbor, saying:

That is the boat in which my friend Shelley went down — the sight of : makes me ill. You should have known Shelley to feel how much I iust regret him. He was the most gentle, most amiable, and *least* vorldly-minded person I ever met, full of delicacy, disinterested beyond ll other men, and possessing a degree of genius, joined to a simplicity, s rare as it is admirable. He had formed to himself a *beau-ideal* of all iat is fine, high-minded, and noble, and he acted up to this ideal even to ie very letter. He had a most brilliant imagination, but a total want of vorldly wisdom. I have seen nothing like him, and never shall again, I m certain."

Prometheus Unbound. — Of all Shelley's poems the *Prometheus Unbound* is the most distinctive and individual expression of his imaginative genius. It is a lyrical drama in four cts, *lyrical* because the slight dramatic action is carried on in a eries of emotional songs. There are thirty-eight different meters i the poem. The story of Prometheus is a familiar old myth in vhich Prometheus is represented as a sufferer from the wrath of ove because he had dared to bring fire from the sky for the use f mortal man. The Greek dramatist Æschylus has made use of ne version of the myth in his *Prometheus Bound.* Shelley does ot imitate Æschylus, but modifies the myth to suit his own urpose.

In the preface to the poem, a remarkable piece of work nowing the poet as a master of English prose, Shelley relates ie circumstances under which the drama was written:

"The poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the aths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous ossoming trees, which are extended in ever-winding labyrinths upon its mmense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue ty of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that vinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even intoxication, were the inspirations to this drama."

The myth of Prometheus is one that appealed strongly to the iind of Shelley. He believed that the established order of ings is founded on oppression; that the two great tyrannies

are the church and the state, government and religion. Jupiter is the type of tyranny, Prometheus is the reformer, and with any reformer Shelley could unreservedly sympathize, for had he not himself, as he declares in the preface to *Prometheus Unbound*, "a passion for reforming the world"? The reformers of Shelley's time were afire with the passionate longings of the French revolutionists who believed that human nature was essentially good and that all that was needed to bring back the Golden Age was a new organization, or no organization at all. This ideal Shelley expresses in the conclusion of the third act of the poem —

> " . . . the man remains
> Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man;
> Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless,
> Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
> Over himself: just, gentle, wise; but man."

The ideal of the eighteenth century was liberty — liberty as an end in itself; the twentieth century considers liberty as merely a means.

The *Prometheus Unbound* is not easy to understand, nor dare it be too minutely analyzed. Roughly speaking the four acts may be characterized as, Act 1 — Patient endurance; Act 2 — Advance and attainment; Act 3 — The catastrophe; Act 4 — A triumphal song. The drama is hard to understand because the characters, such as Demogorgon, the Earth, the Moon, are abstractions. They move in the vast and mysterious spaces of the universe. The drama is a drama of thought and action, whereas real drama consists of action. To appreciate the unity of the poem one must read it carefully and often, but a single reading will impress one with the vigor of its protest against tyranny, and with the beauty of its imagery. As an example of the latter —

> "As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold
> A half unfrozen dew globe, green, and gold,
> And crystalline, till it become a winged mist,
> And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
> Outlives the moon, and on the sun's last ray
> Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst."

The Cenci.—This poem was written in 1819, the same ear in which *Prometheus Unbound* was composed. "In one ear," writes Dowden, "to have created such poems as the *Prometheus* and the *Cenci* is an achievement without parallel in English poetry since Shakespeare lived and wrote." The *Cenci* s a dramatic poem in five acts, dealing with one of the most nhuman and horrible crimes in the sad history of Italian intrigue, ust, and murder. In his dedication to Leigh Hunt Shelley vrites:

"Those writings which I have hitherto published have been little lse than visions. . . . They are dreams of what ought to be, or may be. The drama which I now present to you is a sad reality. I lay aside the resumptuous attitude of an instructor, and am content to paint, with uch colors as my own heart furnishes, that which has been."

Of all Shelley's longer poems this is the most easily read, there s a concreteness and directness that shows a singular comprehen- ion on the part of the poet of the style that attracts the reader f a dramatic narrative. It is hard to believe that the ethereal lights and lyric emotions of the *Prometheus* and the unadorned anguage and concrete reality of the *Cenci* were the products f the same mind during the same year. Shelley himself ated the poem lower than the *Prometheus,* and in this his udgment was good, but nevertheless the *Cenci* is a great produc- ion and highly interesting to the student of Shelley. It is a evelation, like much of his prose, of a mind able to grasp the ommon realities of life.

The Popular Short Poems.—The three most popular short oems are *The Skylark, The Cloud,* and the *Ode to the West Vind. The Skylark* is one of the finest lyrics in the English anguage, in any language for that matter.

"Hail to thee, blithe spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art."

Here Shelley has caught the very airiness and spontaneity of the bird, just as in the concluding stanza we have the longing of the heart that craves the sympathy of a misunderstanding world.

"Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know,
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow,
The world would listen then — as I am listening now."

The Cloud is a fine example of the purest flood of melody. It is a poem that would charm the ear of one who knew nothing of English. The cloud is described as though it had a life of its own. It is not the highest type of poetry, for more than technique and harmony are needed to make the great poem, but of the poet's power to enter into the life of nature it is one of the finest examples of all literature. The *Ode to the West Wind* is not, perhaps, so popular as either *The Skylark* or *The Cloud,* but in many respects it is the finest of the three. Shelley's inspiration for the poem came as he stood in Florence on the banks of the Arno, while the

"West Wind was collecting the vapors which pour down the autumnal rains. Here he composed the greater part of the matchless ode, while a storm was brewing in the distance. Harmonizing under a common idea the forces of external nature and the passion of the writer's individual heart, the stanzas, with all the penetrating power of a lyric, have something almost of epic largeness and grandeur."

The fifth stanza of the poem is the impassioned prayer of the poet:

"Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

"Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

"Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

"Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

"The trumpet of a prophecy! O, wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?"

The Adonais.—The *Adonais* of Shelley ranks with the *ycidas* of Milton and the *In Memoriam* of Tennyson as an egy of the highest class. Shelley and Keats had met at the use of Leigh Hunt in 1817, but this meeting did not lead to imacy. Keats was too proud to cultivate the acquaintance of e more aristocratic Shelley, and Shelley had not as yet found ich to admire in the poetry of Keats. However, his later pression was more favorable, for in February, 1821, Shelley ites to Peacock, "His other poems are worth little; but if *yperion* be not grand poetry, none has been produced by our ntemporaries." A few days after this letter was written Keats ed. On June 5, 1821, Shelley writes:

"I have been engaged these last days in composing a poem on the ath of Keats, which will shortly be finished. . . . It is a highly wrought rk *piece of art,* and perhaps better in point of composition than any- ng I have written."

nd later in the same year he writes, "The *Adonais* in spite of mysticism is the least imperfect of my compositions, and, as image of my regret and honor for poor Keats, I wish it to so."

Like Milton's *Lycidas* the *Adonais* is fashioned on Greek odels. To Bion's *Elegy on the Death of Adonis* and Moschus's *itaph on Bion* Shelley is indebted for hints and phrases. Yet e indebtedness is very slight. Aside from the beauty of its hnical perfection of form and the suggestiveness of its mys- al pantheism, much of the charm of the poem consists in the ssionate expression of one poet who sees in the unfortunate e of another the prefiguring of his own doom.

Shelley's Religion.—In looking coldly at the facts in the e of Shelley, there is much to arouse our prejudice and

antagonism: he was expelled from college for writing a tract o atheism; he deserted his young wife. These are facts that w dare not overlook, nor dare we have one standard for a geniu and another for the commonplace man. But it must be remem bered that Shelley was not a sensualist revelling in debauchery but in many respects a singularly ascetic man, and also that hi atheism is not the atheism that denies the existence of a Goc It must also be remembered that his most defiant saying appeared when he was but a boy. That he believed in th essential spirit of Christianity is seen in such passages as this found in the preface of *The Cenci:*

"Undoubtedly no person can be truly dishonored by the act of anothe and the fit return of the most enormous injuries is kindness and for bearance, and a resolution to convert the injurer from his dark passion by peace and love."

The *Prometheus Unbound* concludes with a stanza breathing the very spirit of Christian teaching:

"To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great, and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory."

In an address on *Religion in Literature* Stopford A. Brooke an English preacher and literary critic, has presented a defence o Shelley in these words:

"But poetry was not voiceless, and by Shelley's lips the religion whic is the masterhood of love was again revealed to the world. Love wa in his thought, the Being of the Universe, the source, the life, the en of all things. This was the root of Shelley's religion, and it is the roc of all true religion; the essence of the true idea of God. . . . And h joined with this two other ideas which are its children — the idea c infinite forgiveness of wrong and the idea of the future regeneration c the human race — both of them vital conceptions in the wider religio which has of late taken substance among mankind."

Social Ideals. — English literature from the time
lowman and More's *Utopia* to Bellamy's *Looking Ba*
Markham's *The Man with the Hoe* has taken an intere
ocial progress of the race, expressing its discontent and
he hope of the inspired dreamer. Shelley, too, had his so
deal. To know Shelley only as the poet of the *Skylark* and the
Ode to the West Wind is to know him only as the sensitive singer
f the joys and sorrows, the dreams and longings, of his own
ndividual life; but there is another side to Shelley — the social
de, the Shelley who agonizes as he sees wayward humanity
ppressed by the strong and wronged by the great.

Soon after his first marriage we find him in Ireland, hoping
o set that portion of the planet aright. He had a big ambition,
o less a one than to remove all political and moral grievances.
His method was the distribution of tracts written by himself.
t is perhaps needless to add that Shelley soon abandoned this
ethod and left Ireland to her sorrows. But his zeal for
umanity was not quenched. His *Song to the Men of England* is
ne of the most sturdy denunciations of social and industrial
rong in literature. Burns was the son of a laborer, from him
e might expect a song of equality; Shelley is the son of an
nglish aristocrat, and yet he writes like a modern Socialist of
he extreme type:

"Men of England, wherefore plough
For the lords who lay you low?
Wherefore weave with toil and care
The rich robes your tyrants wear?

"The seed ye sow, another reaps;
The wealth ye find, another keeps;
The robes ye weave, another wears;
The arms ye forge, another bears.

"Sow seed — but let no tyrant reap;
Find wealth — let no impostor heap;
Weave robes — let not the idle wear;
Forge arms — in your defence to bear."

the most striking evidences of Shelley's unworldlines
.s of his adherence to principle is found in his refusal t
.1 his grandfather's property. When Sir Bysshe Shelley, th
grandfather, died he left a fortune of about a million dollars, o
which four hundred thousand would come by entail to Percy o
the death of his father. The entail on the four hundred thou
sand expired with the life of Percy. The grandfather's wil
provided that all the property should eventually fall to Percy, i
he would consent to entail it. This Percy refused to do becaus
he did not believe a man should bequeath large fortunes to hi
son without knowing something of the ability and disposition o
the son. Such a course might throw great power into the hand
of a tyrant.

A Variety of Estimates.—It is not unusual to find a variet
of opinions concerning the quality of a poet's genius. Th
writings of Shakspere were considered by the Frenchmen dom
inated by the thought of Voltaire to be worthy of the brain o
some wild Canadian savage. Ruskin advises us to "cast Shelle
at once aside as shallow and verbose." Principal Shairp, at on
time professor of poetry at Oxford, with truer insight tells us
"The real is the true world for a great poet, but it was no
Shelley's world." And in a brilliant sentence that has ofte
been quoted, Matthew Arnold writes of Shelley as a "Beautifu
and ineffectual angel, beating in the void his luminous wings i
vain." For an ineffectual angel, however, it seems that Shelle
has made considerable impression in literature. He may hav
been lacking in the qualities that make the social and religiou
reformer, but in the pure and spiritual realm of the imaginatio
in power to portray the elemental grandeur of nature, to snatc
us into the azure deep where we may oversoar

> "The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
> Pinnacled dim in the intense inane—"

he is surely effectual.

There is a large measure of justice in the stricture tha
Shelley's world is not the real world. He was an idealist, not

ealist. This charge does not bar him from the ranks of the reat poets, for the author of the *Faerie Queene* is also an idealist, nd so is the author of the book of *Job*. No one would condemn haucer for being a realist; no one should condemn Shelley for eing an idealist. On this subject Vida Scudder fittingly writes:

"The hold on concrete life of a Shakespeare or a Browning, Shelley d not possess; nor was there granted to him the serene insight of a Vordsworth; nor the philosophic method of Tennyson. But his exquisely equipped temperament, sensitive in every fibre, enabled him to express ose finest aspects of nature where visible trembles into invisible, and ose finest aspects of emotion where rapture and sorrow blend; he has e power to sing melodies which seem echoes of unearthly music; and his veep of spiritual apprehension reveals to him the solemn vision of human estiny as an ordered and harmonious whole."

Every great poet is the spiritual father of other poets. helley is the inspirer of Robert Browning. The following pasge taken from *Pauline*, the first notable poem by the youthful rowning, is generally understood to refer to Shelley:

"Sun-treader, life and light be thine for ever!
Thou are gone from us; years go by and spring
Gladdens and the young earth is beautiful,
Yet thy songs come not, other bards arise,
But none like thee: they stand, thy majesties,
Like mighty works which tell some spirit there
Hath sat regardless of neglect and scorn,
Till, its long task completed, it hath risen
And left us, never to return, and all
Rush in to peer and praise when all in vain.

. . . . . .

Yet, sun-treader, all hail! From my heart's heart
I bid thee hail! E'en in my wildest dreams,
I proudly feel I would have thrown to dust
The wreaths of fame which seemed o'erhanging me,
To see thee for a moment as thou art."

his poem appeared in 1833, eleven years after the death of helley. Browning was then a very young man with a young an's enthusiasm. But that Browning remained an admirer of

Shelley is seen by the little poem, *Memorabilia,* one of the most exquisite and suggestive appreciations in the English language:

"Ah, did you once see Shelley plain,
And did he stop and speak to you,
And did you speak to him again?
How strange it seems and new!

"But were you living before that,
And also you are living after;
And the memory I started at—
My starting moves your laughter!

"I crossed a moor, with a name of its own
And a certain use in the world no doubt,
Yet a hand-breadth of it shines alone
'Mid the blank miles round about:

"For there I picked up on the heather
And there I put inside my breast
A moulted feather, an eagle feather!
Well, I forget the rest."

It is Dowden, I think in one of his later studies on Shelley, who, while enumerating the three classes of men in life and literature, calling the first two the Craftsmen and the Conquerors concludes:

"But how shall we name the third class of men, who live for the idea alone, and are yet betrayed into weakness and terror, and deeds which demand an atonement of remorse; men who can never quite reconcile the two worlds in which we have our being, the world of material fact and the spiritual world above and beyond it; who give themselves away for love or give themselves away for light, yet sometimes mistake bitter for sweet, and darkness for light, children who sometimes stumble on the sharp stones and bruise their hands and feet, yet who can wing their way with angelic ease through spaces of the upper air. These are they whom we say the gods love, and who seldom reach the fourscore years of Goethe's majestic old age. They are dearer perhaps than any others to the heart of humanity, for they symbolise in a pathetic way both its weakness and its strength. We cannot class them with the exact and patient craftsmen; they are ever half-defeated and can have no claim to take their seats besides the conquerors. Let us name them lovers; and if at an

ne they have wandered far astray, let us remember their errors with ntleness, because they have loved much. It is in this third class of ose who serve mankind that Shelley has found a place."

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CHAPTER XII

Keats

KEATS died before he was twenty-six years old, and yet his thought, "I think I shall be among the English poets after my death," has been abundantly fulfilled, for in the language of Matthew Arnold, "He is with Shakspere." Of one whose career is cut short at such an early age it is usually said that he was a man of great promise, but of Keats one may say that he was a youth of great fulfillment. And this not because of the sympathy and pity we feel at his untimely death, not because of the seeds of promise in a quantity of work, but because of the exquisite perfection of his best work. The remarkableness of his achievement can be all the more appreciated when one considers how utterly unknown would be the names of Scott, Carlyle, Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning, had their careers ended as early as that of Keats.

The story of his life is a sad one, and it is possible that the judgment of posterity has been mellowed by the recollection of the misfortunes and miseries of the poet who dying asked that there be inscribed upon his tombstone, "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." But after all deductions have been made, after a century of varying criticism, the fame of Keats is established; he stands secure among the Immortals in that Hall of Fame not made by hands, but built "to the music of their harps."

Birth and Parentage. — John Keats was born October 29 or 31, 1795. Genius is inexplicable and crops out in the most unexpected places. No one knowing the parents of Shakspere, Burns, Shelley, or Whittier, would have predicted a poet. Why then need biographers be amazed, and in some cases embarrassed, because the father of Keats was the manager of a livery stable at Finsbury Pavement, Lower Moorfields, London? Thomas Keats

l done with his might whatsoever his hand had found to do in stable of John Jennings. His character was such that he n the heart and hand of Frances Jennings, the daughter of his ıployer; his ability was such that Jennings retired and gave the ınagement of the business to Thomas, his son-in-law. Cowden arke tells us that the father of Keats was no ordinary man — perfectly remember the warm terms in which his demeanor ed to be canvassed by my parents after he had been to visit his ys." Of the mother we know but little. It is said she was pulsive, fond of amusement, and passionately attached to John, r first born, who returned her devoted affection. A charac-ristic story told by all his biographers is the one first reported Haydon, the painter:

"He was, when an infant, a most violent and ungovernable child. five years of age or thereabouts he once got hold of a naked sword, l, shutting the door, swore nobody should go out. His mother wanted do so; but he threatened her so furiously she began to cry, and was iged to wait till somebody, through the window, saw her position, and ne to her rescue."

more pleasing anecdote is another sword incident in which is represented as standing at the door of her bed-chamber, ıere she lay seriously ill, with a sword in hand to guard her ɔm being disturbed. However, we are not compelled to believe her story.

Education. — The Englishman is likely to send his son to e of the great public schools of England, such as Eton, Rugby, Harrow. Shelley went to Eton and afterwards to Oxford; ron attended Harrow, and later entered Cambridge. The rents of Keats, deterred by the expense from sending John to arrow, selected a school at Enfield kept by the Reverend John arke. Here Keats and his brothers received their education. harles Cowden Clarke, born in 1787 and living until 1877, the n of the head-master, took a special interest in John and came in later years the principal source of our information ncerning the schooldays of our poet. It seems that at the ginning John was not studious, but during the last eighteen

months of his stay at Enfield, with characteristic impetuosity, he devoted himself to reading and study. He became especially fond of classical mythology, reading Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary,* Tooke's *Pantheon,* and Spence's *Polymetis.* This helps to explain how Keats, in no sense a classical scholar, was able to reproduce some phases of the Greek spirit in his poetry. He translated much of the *Æneid.* *Robinson Crusoe* and the *Incas of Peru* were favorite books. He was also acquainted with Shakspere.

His school companions remembered him more as a lively and pugnacious boy than as a devoted student. "He was a boy," wrote in after years Edward Holmes, "whom any one, from his extraordinary vivacity and personal beauty, might easily fancy would become great — but rather in some military capacity than in literature." Charles Cowden Clarke has written entertainingly:

"He was a favourite with all. Not the less beloved was he for having a highly pugnacious spirit, which when roused was one of the most picturesque exhibitions — off the stage — I ever saw. . . . Upon one occasion, when an usher, on account of some impertinent behaviour, had boxed his brother Tom's ears, John rushed up, put himself into the received posture of offence, and, it was said, struck the usher — who could, so to say, have put him in his pocket. His passion at times was almost ungovernable; and his brother George, being considerably the taller and stronger, used frequently to hold him down by main force, laughing when John was 'in one of his moods,' and was endeavouring to beat him. It was all, however, a wisp-of-straw conflagration; for he had an intensely tender affection for his brothers, and proved it upon the most trying occasions. He was not merely the favourite of all, like a pet prize-fighter, for his terrier courage; but his highmindedness, his utter unconsciousness of a mean motive, his placability, his generosity, wrought so general a feeling in his behalf that I never heard a word of disapproval from anyone, superior or equal, who had known him."

Apprenticeship. — At fifteen John was taken from school and apprenticed to a surgeon for a period of five years, a term of service which for some reason was never completed. By this time the boy of fifteen had more than the usual quota of troubles. In 1804 his father had been killed by a fall from his horse, and in 1810 his mother had died of a rapid consumption. John was

ssionately attached to his mother. Haydon tells us that the y "sat up whole nights with her in a great chair, would suffer body to give her medicine or even cook her food but himself, d read novels to her in her intervals of ease."

The four children inherited from their grandparents about 000; this was placed in the care of two guardians, one of om, Mr. Abbey, assumed the principal responsibility and man- ement of the trust. Upon the whole, the fund was badly anaged. Some of John's share was wisely used to pay for his hooling and the premium, £210, of his apprenticeship. lthough Keats served part of his apprenticeship and even tended lectures on surgery and in 1815 passed an examination Apothecaries' Hall, his chief interest was elsewhere. In reply Clarke's query as to how he liked his hospital studies he once id: "The other day during the lecture there came a sunbeam to the room, and with it a whole troop of creatures floating in e ray; and I was off with them to Oberon and fairyland."

It is easy to believe that our gifted student paid allegiance to etry rather than to surgery. While at Edmonton, serving his prenticeship under Mr. Hammond, he had kept in touch with e Clarke family at Enfield. We find him in 1812 asking for penser's *Faerie Queene*. This wonderful romantic allegory told the gifted Elizabethan poet completely enthralled the imagina- on of the young Keats. Spenser is the spiritual father of any a poet; to none was he a more generous father than to the ondon-born lad who once a week walked to Enfield to discuss e *Faerie Queene* with Cowden Clarke. "He romped through e scenes of the romance like a young horse turned into a spring eadow."

Literary Acquaintances.—Among the literary men whom eats met none exerted a stronger influence than Leigh Hunt. hile this influence was not an unmixed good, it would be fair to deny that Keats was greatly indebted to the vivacious d gifted poet who has made a strong bid for immortality by e exquisite charm of *Abou Ben Adhem*. Hunt and his brother hn had been the managers of a liberal newspaper, the *Examiner*.

For publishing a stinging criticism on the Prince Regent they were condemned to two years' imprisonment. It is not hard to understand that their imprisonment made them appear as heroes in the eyes of the young enthusiasts for liberalism and democracy. Hunt had some qualities that prevented him from being either a great poet or a great man. His defect was superficiality. He did, however, have excellencies of no mean order. Writes Mr. Colvin:

"His literary industry was incessant, hardly second to that of Southey himself. He had the liveliest faculty of enjoyment, coupled with a singular quickness of intellectual apprehension for the points and qualities of what he enjoyed; and for the gentler pleasures, graces, and luxuries (to use a word he loved) of literature he is the most accomplished of guides and interpreters."

It is to the credit of Keats that he eventually outgrew the direct literary influence of Hunt, and yet one dare not underestimate the helpful influence upon a literary aspirant of an elder man whose amiable generosity of spirit and good taste made him an inspiring companion.

Another decided influence was Haydon, the painter, whom Keats met at Hunt's house in 1816. Haydon and Hunt were each eleven years older than Keats, and were known when our poet was still unheard of. The painter was a man of great ambition and strong will, but his work has failed to satisfy an art-loving public that demands delicacy and vision as well as ambition and pertinacity. In his own day Haydon's loud egotism and early enthusiasm won a temporary hearing. Keats's early admiration is shown in the sonnet beginning,

"Great spirits now on earth are sojourning."

Another friend, about a year younger than Keats, was John Hamilton Reynolds. He was a man of charming personality and promising literary ability. One of his sisters married Thomas Hood. Reynolds later gave up literature for business, and, although a contributor for years to the magazines, never achieved that distinction which his early years had promised.

In his *Adonais* Shelley has paid a most exquisite tribute to e memory of Keats. When we read lines like these,

> "Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
> But for our grief, as if it had not been,"

e naturally infer that Shelley and Keats had been warm rsonal friends. However, they had but very little of direct sociation. Keats met Shelley at Hunt's home at Hampstead, 1817. "Keats," says Hunt, "did not take to Shelley as kindly Shelley took to him. . . . Keats, being a little too sensitive on e score of his origin, felt inclined to see in every man of birth a rt of natural enemy." Upon this Mr. Colvin comments:

"Pride and social sensitiveness apart, we can imagine that a full derstanding was not easy between them, and that Keats, with his ong vein of every-day humanity, sense, and humor, and his innate enness of mind, may well have been as much repelled as attracted by e unearthly ways and accents of Shelley, his passionate negation of the rld's creeds and the world's law, and his intense proselytizing ardor."

Literary Progress.—In 1817 appeared a small volume of rse by Keats. The poems had been written during the period tween November, 1815, and April, 1817, a time in which both e archaic Spenser and the modern Leigh Hunt exerted their rongest influence. In a later paragraph will be found a fuller scussion of these poems; at present it suffices to say that they ought Keats neither fame nor money. He was not discouraged, wever, but planned to exercise his power of invention by the mposition of a long poem, *Endymion*. He even found pub- hers who had faith sufficient to advance him money to carry his project. In April, 1818, *Endymion* was published, and June of that year we find Keats seeking rest and refresh- ent in a pedestrian tour with his friend Brown. In the mean- ne his brother George with his young bride, Miss Wylie, the G. A. W." of the sonnet, *Nymph of the downward smile,* had termined to seek their fortune in America. Keats and Brown ok leave of these adventurers at Liverpool, and then tramped

into the Lake country and the Western Highlands. There is an oft-repeated story that a short time before this tour Coleridge had met Keats in a lane near Highgate and after shaking hands with him had said in an undertone to Hunt, "There is death in that hand." But on this excursion Keats acted like a man in robust health, walking twenty miles from day to day. Towards the end of his trip he did complain of a cold and a sore throat, and upon the advice of a physician returned to London. During the next few months the brothers, John and Tom, lived together at Hampstead, where Tom died, not unexpectedly, though to the severe grief of his affectionate brother. This was in the beginning of December, 1818. His third and last volume of poems appeared in 1820.

Love Affair.—After the death of Tom, John and Brown lived together in Hampstead, where in the house next to them lived the Brawnes, a mother with her son and two daughters. With Miss Fanny Brawne Keats fell deeply in love. Whether she deserved the devotion of the ardent poet is a question, as it is said that after the death of Keats she would refer to him as that "foolish young poet who was in love with me." And W. M. Rossetti thinks that her face was not one to attract either an artist or a poet, but that it did attract one poet is seen in the profuse admiration poured out in his letters. One wishes that some of these letters with their abandonment of feeling had never been published, or even written; and also that Fanny Brawne had been one of those generous and refined souls whom for Keats to love would have been both a liberal education and a solace in his last days on earth. The following extract from one of his letters to Miss Brawne is full of the bitterness of an unhappy lover:

"I do not think my health will improve much while I am separated from you. For all this I am averse to seeing you: I cannot bear flashes of light, and return into my glooms again. I am not so unhappy now as I would be had I seen you yesterday. . . . I am sickened at the brute world you are smiling with. I hate men, and women more. I see nothing but thorns for the future. . . . I wish I could infuse a little confidence of human nature into my heart: I cannot muster any. The world is too

ıtal for me. I am glad there is such a thing as the grave — I am sure shall never have any rest till I get there."

This abandonment to despair is not so serious a defect as his ck of dignity and self-control as revealed in other letters to iss Brawne. Matthew Arnold comments with some bluntness this phase of the poet's character as having something "under-ed and ignoble, as of a youth ill brought up, without the aining which teaches us that we must put some constraint on our feelings and upon the expression of them."

Closing Days. — The closing days of Keats were days of oom and disappointment, the gloom of a man who with high pirations to become a poet felt that he had failed, the dis-poinment of a lover who knew he never could attain his ideal. is most serious defect, however, was his lack of health, for th vigor and length of days he might have realized his ambi-n to be known as a poet, and it is probable that he would have arried Fanny Brawne. His own comprehension of the limita-ns imposed on him by wasting disease is seen in a letter to his end Reynolds:

"I think if I had a free and healthy and lasting organization of heart, d lungs as strong as an ox's, so as to be able to bear unhurt the shock extreme thought and sensation without weariness, I could pass my life y nearly alone, though it should last eighty years. But I feel my body weak to support me to the height; I am obliged continually to check self, and be nothing."

When the public gave a more friendly reception to his last lume of poems in 1820, Keats was already too weak to enjoy the full the voice of praise and the tonic of approval. His nily had a tendency to what is now known as tuberculosis. the night of February 3, 1820, occurred this incident as given Lord Houghton:

"One night about eleven o'clock Keats returned home in a state of nge physical excitement. . . . He told his friend he had been outside stage-coach, had received a severe chill, was a little fevered; but ed: 'I don't feel it now.' He was easily persuaded to go to bed, and,

as he leapt into the cold sheets, before his head was on the pillow, he slightly coughed, and said: 'That is blood from my mouth. Bring me the candle: let me see this blood.' He gazed stedfastly some moments at the ruddy stain, and then, looking into his friend's face with an expression of sudden calmness never to be forgotten, said: 'I know the color of that blood — it is arterial blood. I cannot be deceived in that color. That drop is my death warrant; I must die.'"

In September, 1820, Keats embarked to go to Italy, hoping to benefit by a change of climate. But fair and sunshiny Italy was unable at this last stage of the disease to bring back that health which had so early in life slipped away. During his last days he was faithfully attended by his devoted friend, Joseph Severn, to whom we are indebted for this account of the end:

"February 27. He is gone. He died with the most perfect ease — he seemed to go to sleep. On the twenty-third, about four, the approaches of death came on. 'Severn — I — lift me up. I am dying — I shall die easy. Don't be frightened: be firm, and thank God it has come.' I lifted him up in my arms. . . . he gradually sank into death, so quiet that I still thought he slept. I cannot say more now. I am broken down by four nights' watching, no sleep since, and my poor Keats gone. . . . I followed his dear body to the grave on Monday (February 26), with many English."

The Volume of 1817. — The advent of a new poet is not heralded with the pomp and ceremony attending the birth of a royal prince; so it is not surprising that the world paid but little attention to the modest volume of 1817 with its motto from Spenser:

"What more felicity can fall to creature
Than to enjoy delight with liberty?"

Keats himself once said in regard to the popularity of this volume, "It was read by some dozen of my friends, who liked it; and some dozen whom I was unacquainted with, who did not."

Undoubtedly the best thing in the volume is the magnificent sonnet, *On First Looking into Chapman's Homer* — one of the finest sonnets in the English language:

"Much have I travell'd in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-brow'd Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific — and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise —
Silent, upon a peak in Darien."

While this is undoubtedly the best production in the book, those critics who say it is the only good thing in the first volume are too stringent in their criticism. The two sonnets, *"O solitude! if I must with thee dwell,"* and *"Keen, fitful gusts are whispering here and there,"* are not without decided merit. To my mind the most important contribution to the volume is the long poem *Sleep and Poetry,* a poem wherein Keats gives free and full expression to his revolt against the narrowness and formalism of the poetic creed that had dominated English poetry during the century before his time. He demands that the imagination be given freedom to fly into the unbounded empyrean, that passion be permitted to penetrate where beauty lies hid. Coleridge and Wordsworth have given us a more mature expression of this creed.

"But neither [writes Colvin] has left any enunciation of theory having power to thrill the ear and haunt the memory like the rhymes of this young untrained recruit in the cause of poetic liberty and the return to nature."

This is one of the most frequently quoted passages:

"Yes, a schism
Nurtured by foppery and barbarism,
Made great Apollo blush for this his land.
Men were thought wise who could not understand
His glories: with a puling infant's force

They swayed about upon a rocking horse,
And thought it Pegasus. Ah dismal soul'd!
The winds of heaven blew, the ocean roll'd
Its gathering waves — ye felt it not. The blue
Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew
Of summer nights collected still to make
The morning precious: beauty was awake!
Why were ye not awake? But ye were dead
To things ye knew not of — were closely wed
To musty laws lined out with wretched rule
And compass vile: so that ye taught a school
Of dolts to smooth, inlay, and clip, and fit,
Till, like the certain wands of Jacob's wit,
Their verses tallied. Easy was the task:
A thousand handicraftsmen wore the mask
Of Poesy. Ill-fated, impious race!
That blasphemed the bright Lyrist to his face,
And did not know it — no they went about,
Holding a poor, decrepid standard out
Mark'd with most flimsy mottos, and in large
The name of one Boileau."

Endymion. — There is a story to the effect that Shelley and Keats agreed that each should write a long poem within a period of six months, and that *The Revolt of Islam* by Shelley, and *Endymion* by Keats were the result. *Endymion,* begun in the spring of 1817, and finished in the beginning of 1818, is a poem of 4,045 lines, an attempt on Keats's part to produce a long poem that would test his power of invention. His friend Bailey has given this account of the production of the poem:

"He wrote and I read — sometimes at the same table, sometimes at separate desks — from breakfast till two or three o'clock. He sat down to his task, which was about fifty lines a day, with his paper before him and wrote with as much regularity and apparently with as much ease as he wrote his letters. Indeed, he quite acted up to the principle he laid down, 'That if poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves of a tree it had better not come at all.' Sometimes he fell short of his allotted task, but not often, and he would make it up another day. But he never forced himself. When he had finished his writing for the day, he usually read it over to me, and then read or wrote letters till we went out for a walk."

In his first prose preface Keats was aggressive and defiant, n the second, the one substituted for the first, he is modest and onciliatory. In it appear such humble lines as these:

"The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible, are not f such completion as to warrant their passing the press; nor should they, f I thought a year's castigation would do them any good. It will not: ne foundations are too sandy."

He expresses the hope that he may be thus fitting himself for erses fit to live, and that at some future day he hopes again to ry to touch the beautiful mythology of Greece.

While everybody is familiar with the beautiful opening line of *Endymion,*

"A thing of beauty is a joy forever,"

very few readers ever have the patience and industry to finish he four books. The poem is prodigal in its excess of imagery, ut scant in human interest; it is rich in cleverness and in gleams f poetry, but poor in coherence and definiteness of action. A ympathetic critic writes:

"Admirable truth and charm of imagination, exquisite freshness and elicity of touch, mark . . . brief passages . . . ; the very soul of poetry reathes in them, and in a hundred others throughout the work; but read urther, and you will in almost every case be brought up by hardly tolrable blemishes of execution and of taste."

Keats himself wrote, "It is as good as I had power to make it." Shelley expressed himself thus:

"I have read Keats' poem; much praise is due to me for having read , the author's intention appearing to be that no person should possibly et to the end of it. Yet it is full of some of the highest and finest leams of poetry."

The appearance of *Endymion* was greeted by bitter criticisms, ne in *The Quarterly Review,* the other in *Blackwood.* Both of hese magazines were unfriendly to Hunt and his radicalism. t was known that Keats was somewhat a follower of Hunt, nd it is supposed that the critics used Keats harshly because of heir desire to castigate Hunt and his coterie.

One of the most discussed questions in the life of Keats Was Keats killed by the savage reviews? Byron thoug Keats's life was "snuffed out by an article." So did Shelley a many others who have accepted the thought of these poets. M Rossetti, after going over all the evidence, comes to this co clusion:

"In his inmost mind Keats was from first to last raised very f above that level where the petty gales of review criticism blow. . Nevertheless he was sensitive to derisive criticism, and more especia to personal ridicule, and even (as Haydon records) gave way to his fe ings of irritation with reckless and culpable self-abandonment. T passed off partially, and would have passed off entirely — it has left in l letters no trace worth mentioning, and in his poetry no trace at all, oth than that of executive power braced up to do constantly better and y better; but then, about a year and a half after the reviews, supervened l fatal illness which can not be reasonably supposed to have had its ro in any critiques, and all the heartache of his unsatisfied love. This la formed the real agony of his waning life: it must have been reinforced some extent by resentment against a mode of reviewing which wou contribute to the thwarting of his poetic ambition, and make him go do into the grave with a 'name writ in water'; but the reviews themselv counted for very little in the last wrestlings of his spirit with death a nothingness. By general constitution of mind few men were less adapt than Keats for being 'snuffed out by an article,' or more certain to snu one out and leave all its ill-savor to its scribe."

Third Volume. — His last volume of poems, bearing the cur bersome title of *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve of St. Agnes, and Oth Poems,* appeared in July, 1820, at a time when death had alread raised its threatening hand against the weakened poet. Amor the poems are the priceless *Ode on a Grecian Urn, Ode to Nightingale,* and *La Belle Dame sans Merci.* Few poems a more celebrated than the two *Odes.* The one addressed to nightingale, although reproducing the spirit of the gloaming, w composed just after breakfast in the spring of 1819 in a period two or three hours. The two lines

> "Charm'd magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn,"

have been called the two most beautiful lines in all English poetry; and Arlo Bates thinks "their richness of suggestion, their witchery of beguilement, their inexhaustible charm, would alone have been sufficient to prove Keats a great poet." Mr. Stedman, the American poet and critic, writes in highest praise:

"I make bold to name one of our shorter English lyrics that still seems to me, as it seemed to me ten years ago, the nearest to perfection, the one I would surrender last of all. What should this be save the *Ode to a Nightingale,* so faultless in its varied unity and in the cardinal qualities of language, melody, and tone? A strain that has a dying fall; music wedded to ethereal passion, to the yearning that floods all Nature."

On a Grecian Urn is as famous as the *Ode to a Nightingale.* Satisfying as to form, it delights with its "luxury of sorrow." There is a tradition that the urn that inspired the ode stood for many years in the garden of Holland House. Palgrave thinks that had the first and last stanzas been equal to the others the ode would be the finest in the English language.

"Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal — yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair."

This second stanza of the ode illustrates that quality characteristic of all his odes —

"extreme susceptibility to delight, close linked with afterthought — pleasure with pang — or that poignant sense of ultimates, a sense delicious and harrowing, which clasps the joy in sadness, and feasts upon the very sadness in joy."

La Belle Dame sans Merci, while not ranking as one of the very best of Keats's poems, is much admired for its union of imagination and reality. Rossetti quotes the poem as "marking

the highest point of romantic imagination to which Keats attained in dealing with human or quasi-human personages, and also the highest level of simplicity along with completeness of art."

By some the *Eve of St. Agnes,* in view of its length, unity, melody, refinement, and richness of imagery, is considered the finest product of this poet's pen. From the first stanza,

"St. Agnes eve — Ah, bitter chill it was!"

to the last where we see the lovers fleeing away into the storm, we are charmed by the witchery of the poet's art. Swinburne calls it "a perfect and unsurpassable study in pure color and clear melody." It is not the highest type of poetry, because its subject matter is not of that high seriousness characteristic of the highest poetry, but of its kind it is perfect. A stanza like the one here quoted illustrates how the poet's art transmutes the commonplace into the uncommon. It is also well to note how the last lines elevate the whole stanza by their imaginative touch suggestive of things far-off and grand.

"And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth, and lavender'd
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferr'd
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon."

His Character. — It has taken the world a long time to disabuse itself of the notion that Keats was, if not effeminate, a person of such frailty and sensitiveness as to be "snuffed out by an article." That unfortunately this erroneous notion still obtains in the mind of many is due to the misconceptions of Byron and Shelley, whose knowledge of Keats, though they were his contemporaries, was far inferior to that possessed by any interested intelligent reader of today. His friends who knew him well assert that he was as much like the "Johnny Keats of

the reviewers as the Holy Ghost." His was a sturdy, defiant, original nature. Pugnacious as a boy, he was aggressive as a man; yet with this sturdiness there was a charm and sweetness of disposition that endeared him to all who knew him well. When Haslam, a friend, heard of the severe illness of Keats, he wrote to Severn — "I cannot afford to lose him; if I know what it is to love, I truly love John Keats." Bailey writes — "He had a soul of noble integrity, and his common sense was a conspicuous part of his character. Indeed his character was, in the best sense, manly." There is common testimony that he was generous and sympathetic. Haydon writes:

"He was the most unselfish of human creatures, unadapted to this world, he cared not for himself, and put himself to any inconvenience for the sake of his friends. . . . He had a kind, gentle heart, and would have shared his fortune with any one who wanted it."

It is not to be inferred from these high tributes that his character was perfect; far from it. Keats himself would have been the last man to claim perfection for himself. Cut off prematurely, he had not yet reached that stability of character which marks the well-developed man. At times we feel the lack of poise. The lack of the ethical element in his poetry suggests a lack of ethical stamina in his life. His love of the beautiful prevented him from sinking into that lowness of dissipation that besmirched the name of Byron, and yet there is some evidence of dissipation. In discussing the character of Keats a discriminating critic concludes a paragraph thus:

"I would say that he had within him the stuff of ample determination and high-mindedness in any matters upon which he was in earnest, mingled, however, with deficient self-control, and with a perilous facility of seeing the seamy side of life."

Characteristics of His Poetry. — It has frequently been said that Keats was a Greek. Stoddard thinks the

"genius of Greek poetry was alien to the English mind until it revealed itself to the young imagination of Keats, who wore it in his heart, not because he was a scholar — for a scholar he was not — but because he was a Greek."

This is, however, a very superficial judgment. The freshness and spontaneity of his poetry, together with his titles of many poems, for instance, *Lamia, Hyperion, Endymion, Ode on a Grecian Urn,* help to this opinion. But to be a Greek means more than spontaneity, freshness, and childlike delight in the joy of the senses. Homer, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, not to mention Plato and Aristotle and Socrates, mean more than Keats suggests. Human life interested the Greek. The poetry of Keats is too remote from the common lot. "Beauty is truth, truth beauty," but is that really all we need to know? In Chaucer, Shakspere, Milton, and Wordsworth, we find more than the exemplification that beauty and truth are one. In matchless form they sing the "still sad music of *humanity,*" as well as the music that runs to smiles and laughter. In their varied art we have a world of men and women with their loves and hates, their jealousies and fears, their quips and cranks, their agonies, hypocrisies, aspirations, treacheries, godlike sacrifices, and Caliban bestialities.

Seeing a world of hypocrisies, Byron dipped his pen in vitriol; Shelley, seeing a world in need of reformation, was consumed with the zeal of the ardent reformer; Keats, seeing a material world, the sordid world of Philistinism, turned away from the present to the past. In the distant world of myth and fable, of gods and goddesses, dryads and fauns, he hoped to find that world of beauty which his imaginative soul craved and could not find in England. For him

> "The glory and the loveliness had passed away."

But herein Keats made a mistake. Great poets find their inspiration in the life about them. Dante may write of the Inferno, but his pages are vital with the life and learning of his medieval Italy; Shakspere produces a *Julius Caesar,* but the men on the boards are the English burghers of the Elizabethan age; Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning see beauty and truth in the busy, interesting life about them. Had Keats lived he doubtless would have acquired that richness of experience which would

ıve infused a deeper humanity into his poetry. His capacity or friendship, his intense nature, his broad sympathies, his sincerity lead one to believe that with added years would have come ıat philosophy of life that would have made him a full interreter of the heart of man. "I think it probable," writes Mr. olvin, "that by power as well as by temperament and aim, he as the most Shaksperean spirit that has lived since Shakspere." ınd Tennyson, much of whose poetry shows the influence of Keats, has said, "He would have been among the very greatest f us if he had lived. There is something of the innermost soul f poetry in almost everything he ever wrote."

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CHAPTER XIII

Wordsworth

BYRON awoke to find himself famous; Scott quickly cap tured the ear of the public by the music of his metric romances; before he was twenty-five Macaulay attracted publ notice by his dashing rhetoric; but of Wordsworth no such ta can be told. His progress has been the way of that patie Nature whom he so loved and celebrated, but it has been progres until today his fame is as fair and apparently as enduring as th face of Nature itself; for few criticis would rate the achieve ment of Byron, or Scott, or Macaulay as highly as that of Words worth. His career is an illustration of the changeful taste o the public. Scott had won golden opinion by his romances tol in animated verse; then Byron, a greater poet, dazzled the publi with brilliant description and satire; and all the while among th quiet Northern hills of England a mystic was communing wit nature and writing great poetry which the great world eithe unheeded or ridiculed. But neither neglect nor ridicule quenche the ardor of this enthusiast who in the spirit of Milton conse crated his life to a divine mission. Whether or no the publi read his poetry, his duty was to write, and write he did, and a last when the public tired of Byron, of whom, as has bee before mentioned, Goethe said that when he reflected he was child, it turned to the meditative, philosophic thinker whos poetry introduced its readers into a new and beautiful world.

Birth and Education.— The life of Wordsworth is as ur dramatic as his poetry. He lived from 1770 to 1850. Two an a half years before he died he gave to Christopher Wordsworth his grandson, some autobiographical memoranda which begin

"I was born at Cockermouth, in Cumberland, on April 7, 1770, t second son of John Wordsworth, attorney-at-law, as lawyers of this cla were then called, and law-agent to Sir James Lowther, afterwards Earl

Lonsdale. My mother was Anne, only daughter of William Cookson. . . . The time of my infancy and early boyhood was passed partly at Cockermouth, and partly with my mother's parents at Penrith, where my mother, in the year 1778, died of a decline, brought on by a cold, the consequence of being put, at a friend's house in London, in what used to be called 'a best bedroom.' My father never recovered his usual cheerfulness of mind after this loss and died when I was in my fourteenth year, a schoolboy, just returned from Hawkshead, whither I had been sent with my elder brother Richard, in my ninth year."

The schooldays of our poet were happy days of freedom and unconventionality. Writes Mr. Shairp:

"High pressure was then unknown. Nature and freedom had full swing. Bounds and locking-up hours they had none. The boys lived in the cottages of the village dames, in a natural friendly way, like their own children. Their playground was the fields, the lake, the woods, and the hill-sides, far as their feet could carry them. Their games were crag-climbing for ravens' nests, skating. . . . Early on summer mornings before a chimney was smoking Wordsworth would make the circuit of the lakes. There were boatings on more distant Windermere, and, when their scanty pocket money allowed, long rides to Furness Abbey and Morecambe Sands."

This program would be attractive to any lively boy, and was not a bad course of instruction for the making of a poet.

In *The Prelude* we have a picture of a happy childhood —

"O, many a time have I, a five years' child,
In a small mill race severed from his stream
Made one long bathing of a summer's day;
Basked in the sun, and plunged and basked again
Alternate, all a summer's day, . . ."

Later, in the same poem, we have the poet's description of his youthful abandonment to the joy of skating:

"And in the frosty season, when the sun
Was set, and visible for many a mile
The cottage windows blazed through twilight gloom,
I heeded not their summons: happy time
It was indeed for all of us — for me
It was a time of rapture! Clear and loud

The village clock tolled six — I wheeled about,
Proud and exulting like an untired horse
That cares not for his home. All shod with steel
We hissed along the polished ice in games
Confederate, imitative of the chase
And woodland pleasures — the resounding horn,
The pack loud chiming, and the hunted hare.
So through the darkness and the cold we flew,
And not a voice was idle; with the din
Smitten, the precipices rang aloud;
The leafless trees and every icy crag
Tinkled like iron; while far distant hills
Into the tumult sent an alien sound
Of melancholy not unnoticed, while the stars
Eastward were sparkling clear, and in the west
The orange sky of evening died away.
Not seldom from the uproar I retired
Into a silent bay, or sportively
Glanced sideway, leaving the tumultuous throng,
To cut across the reflex of a star
That fled, and flying still before me, gleamed
Upon the glassy plain; and oftentimes,
When we had given our bodies to the wind,
And all the shadowy banks on either side
Came sweeping through the darkness, spinning still
The rapid line of motion, then at once
Have I, reclining back upon my heels,
Stopped short; yet still the solitary cliffs
Wheeled by me — even as if the earth had rolled
With visible motion her diurnal round!
Behind me did they stretch in solemn train,
Feebler and feebler, and I stood and watched
Till all was tranquil as a dreamless sleep."

In October, 1787, Wordsworth entered St. John's College, Cambridge. Like Carlyle and Ruskin he has little to say in commendation of what he received at the University. His life had been too free and unrestrained to adapt itself readily to the circumscribed limits of a narrow curriculum. He cared not for "the timid course of our scholastic studies." He also was grieved to note the unworthy passions stimulating those who persevered in the field of contest for prizes. Perhaps, with the

tural presumption of youth, he criticised, when he might have aped a richer harvest by adapting himself to his environment. is even possible that to some of his teachers he appeared "a adstrong, disagreeably independent lad," but, as he himself lls us, he was not devoid of social goodness:

> ". . . Companionships,
> Friendships, acquaintances, were welcome all.
> We sauntered, played, or rioted; we talked
> Unprofitable talk at morning hours;
> Drifted about along the streets and walks,
> Read largely in trivial books, went forth
> To gallop through the country in blind zeal
> Of senseless horsemanship, or on the breast
> Of Cam sailed boisterously, and let the stars
> Come forth, perhaps without one quiet thought."

In this social intercourse Wordsworth may have been acquiring information and insight more useful than that usually given y books. There was another influence at Cambridge that must ave subtly wrought upon the susceptibilities of this impressionble youth — the memories of the great poets who once had been udents at Cambridge — preeminently Spenser and Milton, each f whom had great influences in the making of Wordsworth. n Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal* we run across passages like is, "We sate by the fire without work for some time. . . . Wm. ead Spenser, now and then, a little aloud to us." And again, Read Milton to William."

> "Yea, our blind poet, . . .
> . . . I seemed to see him here
> Familiarly, and in his scholar's dress
> Bounding before me, yet a stripling youth —
> A boy, no better, with his rosy cheeks
> Angelical, keen eye, courageous look,
> And conscious step of purity and pride."

Further Biographical Facts. — The stress of poverty was ssened by a fortunate bequest of £900 from Raisley Calvert, a riend who died in 1795, and £1000 from his father's estate. s Wordsworth's wants were few, he now felt that he could

dedicate his life to the pursuit of poetry. He and his sist spent a winter in Germany, and then later, in 1799, they too permanent residence at the Lakes. A little cottage just outsi the village of Grasmere became his home for eight years. "Do Cottage" today is the shrine of many a Wordsworthian.

"The cottage looks best from the little garden in the rear. The i and the roses soften all the harsh angles of the eaves and convert ev the chimney-pots into things of beauty. . . . At the farthest end is t little summer-house, the poet's favorite retreat. How well he loved th garden is shown in the poem written when he left Grasmere to bri home his bride in 1802:

> "Sweet garden orchard, eminently fair,
> The loveliest spot that man has ever found."

In 1813 he removed to Rydal Mount, a beautiful place comman ing a view of Windermere in the distance.

His home life was very serene and satisfactory. Coleridg said, "His is the happiest family I ever saw" Mary Hutchinso who became his wife, was an excellent woman whose fame h been overshadowed slightly by the more expressive Doroth She was a noble woman and meet to be the wife of a great po In some of his best poetry he has expressed his abiding joy a unchanging love, notably in *She Was a Phantom of Delig* Wordsworth was never a producer of wealth, for his poet brought him but little income, but he was fortunate in receivi bequests which helped him greatly. In 1802 he received £1,8 as his share of a debt long due to his father's estate; in 18 he was appointed distributor of stamps for Westmoreland, position paying him £400 until he resigned it, after years of ser ice; and in 1844, Southey having died the previous year, he w made poet laureate, and was placed upon the civil list with pension of £300. In 1827 Sir George Beaumont died, leavi Wordsworth an annuity of £100 to be spent in a yearly tou In 1828 he and Coleridge visited Belgium and the Rhine; t next year he visited Ireland; he was almost seventy years o however, before he saw Florence and Rome.

He died April 23, 1850, at a ripe old age. His last resti

ace is, as it should be, in Grasmere churchyard, below the hills loved with the passionate fervor of a lover.

Dorothy Wordsworth.—One of the most beautiful companionships in the history of English literature is that between Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. It is she who in his early ars of despondency encouraged him to follow the bent of his nius. They lived together in a rare comradeship; sometimes andering into the unfrequented parts of England, stopping ere and there to talk and eat with cottagers and peddlers; going Germany for a winter; settling at Grasmere to enjoy "plain ving and high thinking." In 1904 Professor Knight published e *Journal of Dorothy Wordsworth,* a book giving the most timate revelation of the life of our poet and his sister at Alfoxen, Grasmere, and while on their tours in Scotland and the ontinent.

In a poem *To My Sister* Wordsworth sings:

"It is the first mild day of March;
Each minute sweeter than before,
The redbreast sings from the tall larch
That stands before our door.

. . . . . .

My sister! ('tis a wish of mine,)
Now that our morning meal is done,
Make haste, your morning meal resign;
Come forth and feel the sun."

It is pleasant to reflect that Dorothy was usually ready to go orth to feel the sun, for she had the soul of a poet, as can be een in this extract from the Alfoxden *Journal:*

"February 17th.—A deep snow upon the ground. Wm. and Coleridge alked to . . . Stowey. Wm. returned, and we walked into the Coombe fetch some eggs. The sun shone bright and clear. A deep stillness in e thickest part of the wood, undisturbed except by the occasional dropng of the snow from the holly boughs; no other sound but that of the ater, and the slender notes of a redbreast, which sang at intervals on e outskirts of the southern side of the wood. There the bright green oss was bare at the roots of the trees, and the little birds were upon it. he whole appearance of the wood was enchanting; and each tree, taken

singly, was beautiful. The branches of the hollies pendent with the white burden, but still showing their bright berries, and their glossy green leaves. The bare branches of the oaks thickened by the snow."

De Quincey has given us an excellent estimate of the value of Dorothy's affectionate interest in her brother's work:

"Whereas the intellect of Wordsworth was, by its original tendency too stern, too austere, too much enamored of an ascetic harsh sublimity she it was — the lady who paced by his side continually through sylvan and mountain tracks, in highland glens, and in the dim recesses of German charcoal burners — that first couched his eyes to the sense of beauty, humanized him by the gentler charities, and engrafted with her delicate female touch those graces upon the ruder growths of nature which have since clothed the forest of his genius with a foliage corresponding in loveliness and beauty to the strength of its boughs and the massiveness of its trunks."

The *Daffodils* poem, one of the most widely quoted of all Wordsworth's poems, may owe its origin to Dorothy. In the description of their walk together from Eusemere, by the side of Ullswater, to Grasmere, Dorothy shows a sensibility to beauty as keen as her brother's. Her very phrasing is incorporated in the poem:

"When we were in the woods beyond Gowbarrow Park, we saw a few daffodils close to the water-side. We fancied that the sea had floated the seeds ashore and that the little colony had so sprung up. But as we went along there were more and yet more; and at last under the boughs of the trees we saw that there was a long belt of them along the shore about the breadth of a country turnpike road. I never saw daffodils so beautiful. They grew among the mossy stones about and above them, some resting their heads upon these stones as on a pillow for weariness, and the rest tossed and reeled and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind that blew upon them from the lake, they looked so gay, ever glancing, ever changing. The wind blew directly over the lake to them. There was here and there a little knot, and a few stragglers higher up, but they were so few as not to disturb the simplicity, unity, and life of the one busy highway."

It is pleasant to remember that Wordsworth acknowledged his indebtedness to this sister of rare insight and imagination

and that he gave credit to his wife for the two finest lines of the poem,

> "They flash upon that inward eye
> Which is the bliss of solitude."

Like all great poets from Homer to Shakspere, Wordsworth took whatever came to his hand and wrought into new and imperishable shapes the crude material. We may find suggestions and even phrasing, such as "toss" and "dance," but the unifying into a perfect whole, even the magic of the very first line, "I wandered lonely as a cloud," are his. Without the poet, the charm of that spring walk would have been limited to the consciousness of the dwellers in the Grasmere cottage; with him, it has become the possession of a race.

Wordsworth and Coleridge.—In his 1814 preface to *The Excursion,* Wordsworth bears witness to the influence of Coleridge, "a dear friend, most distinguished for his knowledge and genius, and to whom the Author's intellect is deeply indebted." Coleridge himself was an enthusiastic admirer of Wordsworth. To Southey he said, "Wordsworth is a very great man, the only man to whom at all times and in all modes of excellence I feel myself inferior." Genius is sturdy and usually "finds a way" despite opposition, and, what is worse, indifference and neglect. But even genius needs the encouragement of appreciation. And what a stimulus to the neglected Wordsworth must have been the open admiration of a man like Coleridge! Their closest companionship was from the summer of 1797 to the summer of 1798, the Wordsworths living at Alfoxden and Coleridge at Nether-Stowey. These extracts from the *Journal* will show on what familiar terms they met. Selecting the references to Coleridge from the records of a few days in March, 1798, we find:

"7th.—William and I drank tea at Coleridge's.

"8th.—Coleridge came after dinner, so we did not walk again.

"9th.—A clear sunny morning, went to meet Mr. and Mrs. Coleridge.

"10th.—Coleridge, Wm., and I walked in the evening to the top of the hill.

"12th.—Tom Poole returned with Coleridge to dinner; a brisk, cold, sunny day.

"13th.—William and I strolled into the wood. Coleridge called us into the house."

"Before long," writes Mr. Raleigh, "the ties of friendship had been fast knit, and Wordsworth had gone further out of himself to meet Coleridge than ever he went, before or after, for the sake of any other human being." It is pleasant to think of these two poets, who were also deep thinkers, spending their days and nights together, at a period when their imagination was most active, discussing everything in heaven or earth needful for the formulation of a theory of poetry or a philosophy of life.

It is well known that *The Ancient Mariner* was the result of a plan by Wordsworth and Coleridge to write a poem to defray the expense of a walking tour. Wordsworth contributed very little to the poem, as he found his manner would not fit in with the style of Coleridge. "*The Ancient Mariner* grew and grew," writes Wordsworth, "till it became too important for our first object, which was limited to our expectation of five pounds; and we began to think of a volume." Coleridge tells us that it was agreed that his poems should deal with the supernatural and romantic, so as to invest them with human interest and the semblance of truth; Wordsworth, for his part, was to give the charm of novelty to the commonplace by awakening the lethargic mind to the loveliness and charm of the world before us.

How well Coleridge succeeded is answered by *The Ancient Mariner,* one of the immortal possessions of English poetry. While Wordsworth greatly admired the poem, he saw in it grave defects, and he sought to show his friend and the world a better way. *Peter Bell,* which was finished in the summer of 1798, is Wordsworth's *Ancient Mariner.* Before its publication in 1819 *Peter Bell* had undergone many revisions, but these revisions have not saved the poem from serving as an illustration of the weaker side of our poet's creed. There is a wild magic in *The Ancient Mariner,* a compelling force sweeping us away into the dream world where reality and illusion are blended into one.

n *Peter Bell,* instead of the unknown, parlous sea, we have the amiliar English landscape; instead of the mariner, we have a otter, or peddler of earthenware; instead of the mysterious alba- ross, we have "a solitary Ass." The plot is simple and the liction must have caused more criticism than the simplicity of the lot. It is true the poem contains lines as famous as

"A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more,"

et, on the other hand, there are entire stanzas that come dan- gerously near to being mere doggerel. For instance, the poem egins,

"There's something in a flying horse,
There's something in a high balloon;
But through the clouds I'll never float
Until I have a little boat
Shaped like the crescent moon."

The French Revolution.—Every poet is greatly influenced y the Zeitgeist. Burns, Wordsworth, Byron, and Shelley lived hen the air was vocal with the cries of liberty, fraternity, equal- ty. A man of Wordsworth's austerity and simplicity would aturally sympathize with democratic ideals. This interest had een increased by acquaintance with continental life, for in addi- ion to a walking tour of fourteen weeks through France, Swit- zerland, and the north of Italy, while still an undergraduate, he ater spent a year in France, studying the language and people. At Blois he became acquainted with Michel Beaupuis, a man of dmirable qualities whose influence strengthened the republican- sm in the heart of the young Englishman. The consecration of Beaupuis, who would probably be called upon to sacrifice his life pon the altar of liberty, impressed upon the poet the reality of olitics. In the ninth, tenth and eleventh books of *The Prelude* ve find a full account of his impressions while in France. A haracteristic episode is this:

". . . And when we chanced
One day to meet a hunger-bitten girl,
Who crept along fitting her languid gait
Unto a heifer's motion, by a cord
Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane
Its sustenance, while the girl with pallid hands
Was busy knitting in a heartless mood
Of solitude, and at the sight my friend
In agitation said, ''Tis against *that*
That we are fighting,' I with him believed
That a benignant spirit was abroad
Which might not be withstood, that poverty
Abject as this would in a little time
Be found no more, that we should see the earth
Unthwarted in her wish to recompense
The meek, the lowly, patient child of toil,
. . . . . .
And finally, as sum and crown of all,
Should see the people having a strong hand
In framing their own laws; whence better days
To all mankind."

In the autumn of 1792 Wordsworth was back again in Paris the September massacres had taken place, and he was unsettle in mind as he came in close relation with the horrors of th Revolution. He feels that had he had his own way,

"Doubtless I should then have made common cause
With some who perished; haply perished too,
A poor mistaken and bewildered offering."

But he was called home from his French trip before he had ca his lot with the active revolutionists. The first great shock to h moral nature came when Great Britain declared war upon th French Republic, for all his sympathies were with the revolutio ists. But his old enthusiasm cooled, and his visions of a ne earth faded away with the excesses of the French partisans, ar the enthronement of the ambitious Corsican with power greate than that ever wielded by the despotic Bourbons.

Nature.—The name of Wordsworth is forever associate

with what we call "the love of nature." The modern attitude toward nature is so common that it is easy to forget what we owe to Wordsworth. Of course, there were celebrants and worshippers at the shrine of nature long before this single-minded poet chanted his hymns of adoration. From David and Homer to Chaucer and Shakspere, the great poets had loved the mountain and the sea, the song of bird and the whisper of the wind. And just before Wordsworth's time Cowper and Burns had done much to redeem poetry from the didactics and artificiality of the Classic school. But Wordsworth is Nature's own high priest, and with her name his shall be forever indissolubly linked, for no other poet in the long and glorious history of English literature has consecrated his powers so unreservedly to the patient interpretation of the meaning of nature.

In one of his youthful poems, *The Evening Walk,* he writes:

> "And, fronting the bright west, yon oak entwines
> Its darkening boughs and leaves, in stronger lines."

Nearly fifty years after, he said:

> "I recollect distinctly the very spot where this struck me. . . . The moment was important in my poetical history; for I date from it my consciousness of the infinite variety of natural appearances, which had been unnoticed by the poets of any age or country, so far as I was acquainted with them; and I made a resolution to supply in some degree the deficiency. I could not have been at that time above fourteen years of age."

It is easy for a boy of fourteen to make a resolution; it is unusual for a boy of that age to make a resolution to supply a deficiency in English poetry. In this case the boy never forgot his purpose, and as he grew older in years he supplied the deficiency.

To Wordsworth nature was more than an object: it was a living presence; an informing Spirit to instruct and purify; a Divine Essence to comfort and sustain. In his maturity he writes:

". . . For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime of
Something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods
And mountains, and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye and ear — both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being."

Wordsworth was not a bookish man, although not unfamiliar with the classics and ready to acknowledge the reality of the world of books, but he sought his inspiration elsewhere and scorned the thought that poets are made by the study of the art of poetics.

"A Poet! — He hath put his heart to school."

He writes in scorn of those who teach that poetry is to be made by rule and precept. Early in life his poetic creed was declared —

"Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife;
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

"And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

"One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can."

These passages just quoted express our poet's idea of the power of nature. How is man to come under the wholesome influence of this mighty power? By study, by strenuosity? No; grow in wisdom as the lilies of the field grow in loveliness. Be passive; place yourself, as it were, in the hypnotic state.

"The eye — it cannot choose but see;
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where'er they be,
Against or with our will.

"Nor less I deem that there are Powers
Which of themselves our minds impress;
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness."

It has been asked whether Wordsworth recognized that nature has also a heartless aspect, that phase to which Tennyson refers in *In Memoriam,* "Nature, red in tooth and claw." Has Wordsworth so puerile an optimism that he has shut his eyes to the tragedies of life? No; he saw the miseries of the poor, he heard the "still, sad music of humanity," and had sympathy for the suffering of the lower animals. Misery and death he recognized, but without attempting to justify the ways of God to man and beast he leaves them "unintelligible and awful." Instead of trying to solve the unsolvable, he tried to enlarge man's conception of joy. Job and Æschylus, Dante and Shakspere, had painted in awful colors the dark background of human existence; Wordsworth's aim is to bring into clearer view the neglected background of joy. Writes Mr. Raleigh:

"A simple, irrepressible joy in things is the motive of many of Wordsworth's shorter poems. His heart leaps up when he beholds a rainbow in the sky. The daffodils, dancing in the breeze, fill him with the spirit of gaiety, and live in his mind and heart, a joyful memory. His poetry does not convert these things into food for reflection; it is the mark of all

mystics that they make the intellect feed the emotions, not the emotions the intellect. He tries to catch the experience, just as it was, and to preserve its brightness. And this made his poems the butt for ridicule; his joy in trivial things seemed a trivial joy, which it was not."

Similarly writes Matthew Arnold:

"Wordsworth's poetry is great because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature, the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties; and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it."

Mr. Shairp, an intelligent and sympathetic critic of Wordsworth, makes a fourfold division of the poet's manner of dealing with nature: *First,* he does not place a landscape before the reader by the enumeration of details, but by presenting the essential features. *Secondly,* Wordsworth looked upon the world, not as a mass of dead matter, but as something full of life. He was an idealist, especially in his earlier years. Of that period he wrote, "Many times while going to school have I grasped at a wall or tree to recall myself from the abyss of idealism to the reality." *Thirdly,* he had the double gift of highest idealty and literal realism. He saw nature with eyes that noted the minutest facts of the outward world. "No modern poet has recorded so large and so varied a number of natural facts and appearances, which had never before been set down in books." *Fourthly,* he is familiar with all the moods of nature; every place yields him its secret.

Poetic Diction. — In the preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* Wordsworth explains that

"The majority of the following poems are to be considered as experiments. They were written chiefly with a view to ascertain how far the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society is adapted to the purposes of poetic pleasure."

This is fortunately but a partial explanation of the genesis of the poems, for good poetry is not the result of an attempt to establish a thesis or theory; but the explanation raises an interesting

uestion in regard to poetic diction. Simplicity is the last word n art, but there is a simplicity of aristocracy, as well as of the lower classes of society." There are many words, phrases, which by their association refuse to lend themselves to poetic xpression. When Shakspere writes,

"How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!"

e is both simple and poetic; so, too, is Walt Whitman when he ings,

"When lilacs last in the dooryard bloomed."

To strike the magic note of genuine poetic simplicity is a high chievement, and that Wordsworth sometimes failed is not conlusive proof that his theory was wrong. But just as Walt Whitman is best remembered by those poems which conform to onventional standards, so Wordsworth is at his best when he orgets his theory. Lines like,

"I wandered lonely as a cloud,"

nd

"The sea that bares her bosom to the moon,"

ave the simplicity of greatness, but they do not suggest the iction of the lower classes.

There is another aspect of the subject that deserves considera-ion. Wordsworth is a realist; he wishes to keep his feet on he ground of actuality; to keep his eye fixed on the object. He hooses humble and rustic life because there the passions of the eart attain their maturity, and speak a more emphatic language, ecause our elementary feelings there have a greater simplicity; nd lastly, "because in that condition the passions of men are ncorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature." his might be true of an ideal rustic society of the lower classes, ut where can such society be found save in the poet's dream of rcadia? The rustics whom Wordsworth found about the Lakes ere a simple-minded, worthy people, but his greatest indebtedess was not to them. Mr. Raleigh writes:

"Another society, which uses a language greater, more passionate, and purer than the language of the shepherds of the Lakes, was, in his theory at least, overlooked by Wordsworth — the society of poets, living and dead. It is they who preserve language from pollution and enrich it with new powers. They redeem words from degradation by a single noble employment. . . . And they were Wordsworth's masters, though he pays them scant acknowledgment. . . . The dalesmen brought their humble speeches to the poet, who accepted or rejected them, setting himself as judge, with Shakspere, Milton, and Spenser as assessors."

He was exceedingly careful in his use of language, for no poet has revised his work more frequently. As an illustration of his solicitude in getting the proper word we may read in Dorothy's *Journal* how William spent the morning trying to think of an adjective to describe the cuckoo.

Two Long Poems. — *The Excursion* and *The Prelude* are the longest poems by Wordsworth. In the edition before me *The Excursion* occupies 347 pages, and *The Prelude* 329. The Preface to the 1814 edition of *The Excursion* explains that these poems are part of a work to be called *The Recluse.* This plan was never completed.

The Prelude is an exposition of the "origin and progress of his own powers." It is autobiographical, and, as the analysis of the growth of a poet's mind, is the most remarkable poem in the English language. There are fourteen books, or cantos, with headings such as *Childhood and Schooltime, Residence at Cambridge, Summer Vacation,* and *Residence in France.* The form and style of the poem can be seen by turning to the extract, already quoted, descriptive of the boy's joy in skating.

Wordsworth's productivity has been divided into three periods — the springtime, the full mid-summer, and the sober autumn. *The Excursion,* along with *Laodamia, Dion,* and the *Duddon Sonnets,* belongs to the mid-summer period. It is not surprising that Byron writes jestingly of *The Excursion* as written in a manner that is his aversion, for there is an impassable gulf between the satiric Don Juan and the meditative Wanderer and the Solitary, the two chief characters of *The Excursion.* This poem contains the poet's view of Man, Nature, and Society. The

Wanderer is a man of humble birth, whose youth was spent in quiet communion with the elemental powers. He is a poet without the gift of expression. He needs but a few books: *Milton* and the *Bible* are sufficient. The Spirit that prompts the Savoyard to quit his naked rocks, the Swiss to leave his narrow vales, impels "his restless mind to look abroad with hope." To see the world and gain a competence he turns peddler. It is easy to understand how the wits of the old school of poetry would find infinite cause for jest in the unromantic peddler. The Solitary was born in a higher station in life, but has not the peace of God within his heart as has the Wanderer. The loss of his wife and children, the shattering of his dreams for the regeneration of society through the apparently miserable ending of the French Revolution, had broken his spirit. "To raise his downcast spirit, to infuse faith and hope and moral wisdom into his heart, is the effort of the Wanderer." To show that hope and faith could be instilled into the hopeless and faithless was Wordsworth's intention when he planned *The Recluse*.

Sonnets. — Wordsworth was a prolific writer of sonnets, about 450 appearing in his published works. He wrote sonnet sequences on such unpromising topics as *Punishment of Death,* and three series, running up to 132, called *Ecclesiastical Sonnets.* Of course, there is great inequality among these hundreds, many of them having the stamp of mediocrity, but there are at least a half-dozen that rank with the best sonnets in the language, comparing very favorably with the best of Shakspere, Milton, and Keats. Among the best are the two which follow:

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
The sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not. — Great God, I'd rather be
A pagan suckled in a creed outworn;

So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

The few lines of this great poem are a compendium of Wordsworth's philosophy; it is his vehement protest against that "getting and spending" which is the bane of the world. Written more than a hundred years ago, it carries its message to a generation needing more than ever this warning from a prophet of Nature.

Another magnificent sonnet is:

"Earth has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This city now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temple lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor, valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!"

This sonnet was written on the roof of a coach when Wordsworth was on his way to France in 1802. Dorothy writes in her *Journal:*

"We left London on Saturday morning at half past five or six, the 30th [an error, the 31st] of July. We mounted the Dover coach at Charing Cross. It was a beautiful morning. The city, St. Paul's, with the river, and a multitude of little boats, made a most beautiful sight as we crossed Westminster Bridge. The houses were not over-hung by their cloud of smoke, and they were spread out endlessly, yet the sun shone so brightly, with such a fierce light, that there was something like the purity of one of nature's own grand spectacles."

Bagehot thinks this sonnet the perfection of purity in style.

"Instances of barer styles than this may easily be found, instances of lder style — few better instances of purer style. . . . To Wordsworth s been vouchsafed the last grace of the self-denying artist — you think ither of him nor of his style, but you cannot help thinking of — you ust recall — the exact phrase, the *very* sentiment he wished."

Famous Short Poems. — Among the best known shorter oems are the famous *Ode on Intimations of Immortality, Reso- ution and Independence, Lines Written Above Tintern Abbey, he Was a Phantom of Delight,* and *I Wandered Lonely as a loud.*

Many consider the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* his reatest work, Emerson saying that this ode "is the high- ater mark which the intellect has reached in this age." The oem was published in 1807. "Two years at least," Words- orth says, "passed between the writing of the first four stanzas nd the remaining part." He says he does not wish to teach the octrine of a pre-natal state. "It is far too shadowy a notion be recommended to faith, as more than an element in our stincts of immortality." The poet does not try to prove the nprovable, but attempts to give a record of his feelings. "We eel that we are greater than we know," is the thought of this reamer who

ooks back with passionate regret to the lost radiance of his childhood. . The poem is a product of that majestic kind of metaphysical imagi- tion which transcends space and time, and makes

"'Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence.'"

Resolution and Independence is one of the most inspiring of l his poems. It is an intimate revelation of the man himself, record of an actual experience. We are apt to think of Words- orth as calmly and hopefully pursuing the poetic path without a oubt as to his future. In this poem we have a picture of a poet jected and uncertain as he considers his life work. Shall he a poet or turn to the prosaic task of earning a living? In this ood he sees the lonely old leech-gatherer persevering in his mble task —

"I could have laughed myself to scorn to find
In that decrepit man so firm a mind.
'God,' said I, 'be my help and stay secure;
I'll think of the leech-gatherer on the lonely moor.'"

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CHAPTER XIV

Scott

MEN have always been interested in stories, and in the story-teller. Scott is one of the greatest story-tellers in the English language; he is also a poet of no mean order. His life was so prosperous for many years, his success so unprecedented in the history of letters, that tragic is not the first word that comes to the mind in thinking of the career of Scott, and yet his career, so admirable in many respects, is a striking illustration of that dark spirit of perversity that broods in irony over the hopes of man. Burns's life is the tragedy of weakness, Scott's is the tragedy of strength. Shelley failed because while keeping his head in the clouds, he could not guide his feet through earth; seeing visions of a new heaven, he lost his sense of the real world. Scott used all the magnificent resources of a rich endowment of genius to establish a baronial estate to be forever associated with the name of Scott — and then died in debt, although his wizard's art had earned, it is estimated, over £140,000. Fifteen years after his death, when his royalties had paid off his debt, all his children, for whom he had labored, and his oldest grandchild were dead. What he sought for he failed to attain, but Time, as if to compensate for the cruelty of Fate, has exalted his name to the pinnacle of fame, for among the great benefactors of the human race must be written the name of Sir Walter Scott.

Ancestry. — Walter Scott, like Shakspere, Burns, Carlyle, Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Browning — in fact, like most names in English literature — does not suggest a literary ancestry, nor would this have been a matter of concern to Scott, who cared more to be known as the founder of a prosperous Scotch family than as a popular author. In an autobiography written in 1808 he tells us, "My birth was neither distinguished nor sordid. According to the prejudices of my country, it was esteemed

gentle, as I was connected, though remotely, with ancient famili both by my father's and mother's sides." He was a line descendant of Auld Watt of Harden, whose praises he sang " many a ditty." He tells with evident delight a story of h grandfather, Robert Scott, who with £30 loaned by a faithful o servant set off to purchase at a fair enough sheep to stock h newly rented farm. The old servant accompanied his mast and sought with care to find the best stock.

> "But what was his surprise to see him galloping a mettled hunt about the race course, and to find he had expended the whole sum in th extraordinary purchase! Moses's bargain of green spectacles did n strike more dismay into the Vicar of Wakefield's family than my gran father's rashness into the poor old shepherd."

When Scott's own sanguine disposition led him into business ve tures that bore no good results, he jocosely attributed his ba venture to the inheritance he had received from his sanguin grandfather. "Blood will out; my building and planting was bu his buying the hunter before he stocked his sheepwalk, ove again." There was this striking difference, however: The gran father's rashness was rewarded by his selling the hunter fo double what he had paid, while Sir Walter's optimistic specul tions ended in ruin.

Walter Scott, the father of our Sir Walter, was a "Writer t the Signet," or attorney-at-law, a man industrious, kind, an religious. Scott tells us that although unfitted by disposition t his profession, he rose to eminence in it. The author's moth was Anne Rutherford, the eldest daughter of a professor in th University of Edinburgh. Of their numerous family of twelv children, but five survived early youth. Walter was born o August 15, 1771, "in a house belonging to my father at the hea of the College Wynd," Edinburgh. Scott himself tells us h was an uncommonly healthy child until about eighteen month old, when a fever caused a serious lameness in his right le Hoping to help the child by country air and quiet, the family too him to the farmhouse of Sandy-Knowe. Here his nurse, wh afterward became insane, confessed to the old housekeeper tha

he had been tempted, with the idea of getting rid of her care and hen going back to the city, to cut the child's throat with a scissors nd then bury him under the moss. The nurse was dismissed. One of his first childish recollections is that of being swathed in he blood-warm skin of a flayed sheep, a reputed remedy for ameness. Better than such old wives' remedies were the gentle xercise and outdoor life of the country. He thinks that by his ourth year, when he was taken to the Bath waters, he had ecome a sturdy child. Here he remained for a year, learned to ead, went to see *As You Like It,* where he was so highly scan-dalized by the quarrel between Orlando and his brother that he ried out, "A'n't they brothers?"

Education. — As he grew older his lameness disposed him to much reading. He was fortunate in having a mother who was ond of poetry and imaginative writings. To her he read Pope's *Homer* and the songs in Ramsay's *Evergreen.*

"My mother had good natural taste and great feeling: she used to make me pause upon the passages which expressed worthy and generous entiment. . . . My own enthusiasm, however, was chiefly awakened by he wonderful and terrible — the common taste of children, but in which I have remained a child even unto this day."

In 1778 he went to the second class of the grammar school, where ecause of his lack of preparation he played an inferior part efore his teachers, but his amiability and imagination made him opular with his companions. His ability as a story-teller won im friends.

"In the winter play hours, when hard exercise was impossible, my ales used to assemble an admiring audience round Lucky Brown's fireside, nd happy was he that could sit next to the inexhaustible narrator. . . . So, on the whole, I made a brighter figure in the yards than in the class."

This school education was supplemented by instruction at home y a tutor, a man of studious habits but narrow prejudices. With im Walter had many arguments on religion and politics, the boy early defending the cause of the established church and the olitical creed of the Cavalier. "I took up my politics at that

period as King Charles II did his religion, from the idea that the Cavalier's creed was the more gentlemanly persuasion of the two.'

Under a new teacher, Dr. Adam, he studied Latin, reading the popular classics, in which he took great interest. When twelve years old he found in his mother's dressing-room

"some odd volumes of Shakspere, nor can I easily forget the rapture with which I sat up in my shirt reading them by the light of a fire in her apartment, until the bustle of the family rising from supper warned me it was time to creep back to my bed."

At this time Dr. Blacklock began to take an interest in the boy opening up his library to the eager reader. Here he read Ossian and Spenser, having the good taste to prefer Spenser. "Spenser I could have read forever; . . . the quantity of Spenser's stanzas I could repeat was truly marvelous." This was certainly not a bad schooling for the future poet and novelist. Another book that played a large part in his boyish world was Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*.

"I remember well the spot [he writes in his autobiography] where I read these volumes for the first time. It was beneath a high plantanus tree, in the ruins of what had been intended for an old-fashioned arbor in the *garden* I have mentioned. The summer day sped onward so fast that notwithstanding the sharp appetite of thirteen, I forgot the hour of dinner was sought for with anxiety, and was still found entranced in my intellectual banquet. To read and to remember was in this instance the same thing, and henceforth I overwhelmed my schoolfellows, and all who would harken to me, with tragical recitations from the ballads of Bishop Percy. The first time, too, I could scrape a few shillings together, which were not common occurrences with me, I bought unto myself a copy of these beloved volumes; nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently or with half the enthusiasm. About this period, also, I became acquainted with the works of Richardson, . . . with Fielding, Smollett, and some others of our best novelists."

When one reads of this early passion for ballads, he is not surprised to learn that Scott made his first venture in literature by publishing a collection of ballads, and that his first long poem was *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*.

In 1783 Scott entered the College at Edinburgh. During th

years of his formal academic training, both in high school and in college, he was not distinguished as a student. Not that he was not busy; Scott was never an idler, but like many another genius he found his principal nutriment in studies outside of the prescribed curriculum. He browsed about in the fields of romance — Scotch, English, French, Spanish, Italian — absorbing and retaining matter that had little relation to the preparation of a lawyer, but a rich equipment for the future novelist. Of him could be said what he himself has written of one of his characters in *Waverley:*

"He had read, and stored in a memory of uncommon tenacity, much curious, though ill-arranged and miscellaneous information. In English literature he was master of Shakspere and Milton, of our earlier dramatic authors, of many picturesque and interesting passages from our old historical chronicles, and was particularly well acquainted with Spenser, Drayton, and other poets who have exercised themselves on romantic fiction."

In May, 1786, he was apprenticed for five years to his father for the study of law. Technically he was a Writer's Apprentice, much of his work consisting of transcribing records and legal papers, for which he received a threepence for every page of a certain number of words. We are told he occasionally did 120 pages within twenty-four hours, and with the money thus made would buy a book or rare coin. Lockhart thinks his work as apprentice was a valuable training. Scott himself always maintained, in contradiction to the common view, that genius and ability to do drudgery can go together; that to spend some time in doing the ordinary duties of life is good for the higher faculties. He himself is such a good example of genius enshrined in a healthy common sense that it is easy to believe he had no patience with the doctrine that genius and insanity are one.

Marriage and First Publications. — Scott fell in love with a charming girl, Wilhelmina,* the daughter of Sir John Stuart. For several years he cherished the hope that she would return his affection, but in 1797 she married William Forbes. This love

* For the story of her life, see *The Century Magazine,* July, 1899.

of Scott's is said to be the first and only deep passion of his life. One of the strongest traits in his character was his pride; possibly it was this quality that hastened his marriage with Mademoiselle Charpentier, or Miss Carpenter, the daughter of a French royalist, whose widow resided in England. She was a young woman of amiability and good sense. "It was rather," writes a biographer, "like a bird of paradise mating with an eagle. Yet the result, on the whole, was a happy one; for she had a thoroughly kindly nature, and a true heart." They were married on Christmas Eve, 1797; she brought with her a fortune of £200 a year.

Scott's earliest attempts at poetry, aside from those efforts which every youth makes and which are never heard of, was a version of Bürger's *Leonora,* "a spectre-ballad of the violent kind." This led to four or five original ballads contributed to a collection made by "Monk" Lewis. On Christmas, 1799, he was appointed Sheriff-Depute with a salary of £300, and as the duties of this office were not onerous, the income enabled him to indulge his propensity for literature. In 1802 a collection made by Scott himself, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,* was published by Ballantyne, a name destined to play a large and baleful part in the fortunes of the house of Scott. Some of the ballads in this collection were original; all were edited with consummate taste. This collection of popular ballads, appearing first in two volumes, was his first literary success. Writes Mr. Hutton:

> "The whole edition of eight hundred copies was sold within the year, while the skill and care which Scott had devoted to the historical illustration of the old ballads, and the force and spirit of his own new ballads, written in imitation of the old, gained him at once a very high literary name. . . . It is much easier to discern the great novelist of subsequent years in the *Border Minstrelsy* than even in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel, Marmion,* and *The Lady of the Lake* taken together."

A third volume was added in 1803. That Scott himself was pleased with the success is recorded in a letter to his brother-in-law, Charles Carpenter:

"I have contrived to turn a very slender portion of literary talent to me account, by a publication of the poetical antiquities of the Border . after receiving about £100 profit for the first edition, which my vanity nnot help informing you went off in six months, I have sold the copy-ght for £500 more."

The Longer Poems. — The longer poems are *The Lay of the ast Minstrel, Marmion, The Lady of the Lake, The Vision of on Roderick, Rokeby, The Bride of Triermain, The Lord of e Isles,* and *Harold the Dauntless.* Of these, the most popular e the first three.

Although *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* was not published ntil 1805, the first canto was written in 1802. The poem as dedicated to Charles, Earl of Dalkeith (later the Duke of uccleugh), whom Scott loyally admired as the head of his an. The poem was immediately successful. Before 1830, ,000 copies, not counting pirated editions, had been sold, and cott had received £769, "an event," says Palgrave, "with few rallels in the history of British poetry." In comparison with e princely sums the author later received for his fiction, the m is not large, but in comparison with the ten guineas received Dr. Johnson for his *London,* the amount of compensation dicated an appreciation far beyond the hopes of the poet's most nguine admirers. The first edition, of which 750 copies were inted, was soon exhausted. Thirteen other editions followed quick succession. In this connection we may record that fore *Marmion* was published Scott was paid 1,000 guineas, a ansaction which Byron considered very mercenary, not know-g that Scott took the money to help a brother in financial raits; and for one-half of the copyright of *The Lord of the les* Constable paid him 1,500 guineas.

Jeffrey, the editor of *The Edinburgh Review,* found fault ith *The Lay,* but Wordsworth and Campbell, along with the litical rivals, Pitt and Fox, praised its excellences. The gen-al public liked its dash and vigor. The rude energy tempered a natural delicacy attracted readers who had grown aweary the moralizing, reflective poetry then in vogue. The meter

itself, as modified by Scott, seemed new, for though Chaucer Milton, Butler, and Swift had used the octosyllabic verse, inferio rhymesters had brought it into disfavor. Shakspere had ridicule it as "the butter-woman's rate to market," and the "very fals gallop of verse." Scott got his idea from Coleridge's *Christa bel,* which was not published until 1816, but Scott had heard Si John Stoddart recite some parts of it.

"He saw that Coleridge had remedied all the defects of the octo syllabic measure, by freeing it from its rigid formality, and by dividing by time instead of by syllables; by the beat of four, as Leigh Hun remarks, into which you might get as many syllables as you could, . . varying it further with alternate rhymes and stanzas, with rests an omissions, analogous to those in music."

In addition to the romantic story of the freebooters of th Border, the poem contained descriptions of natural scenery, no so fine as those contained in his later poems, but indicating th poet's love of nature, a love very highly praised by Ruskin, wh wrote:

"In consequence of his unselfishness and humility, Scott's enjoymen of Nature is incomparably greater than any other poet I know. All th rest carry their cares to her, and begin maundering in her ears about the own affairs. But with Scott the love is entirely humble and unselfish. ' Scott, am nothing, and less than nothing; but these crags, and heaths, an clouds, how great are they, how lovely, how for ever to be beloved, on for their own silent, thoughtless sake!'"

The first stanza of the sixth canto of *The Lay* is the bes known of all the poetic writings of Scott. Its fire and patriot fervor help to explain the popularity of the author.

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
'This is my own, my native land!'
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burn'd
As home his footsteps he hath turn'd
From wandering on a foreign strand!
If such there breathe, go, mark him well,
For him no Minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,

Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite these titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonor'd, and unsung."

Marmion was begun in November, 1806, and was ready for publication in February, 1808. It had a remarkable sale at once. The first edition in quarto was sold at a guinea and a half; 2,000 copies were disposed of in a month, and by 1836 successive editions had increased the sale to 50,000 copies. Some enthusiastic critics have compared this poem with Homer. While not assenting to this high comparison, one can agree with those who consider it the best of Scott's longer poems.

"Judge Scott's poetry [writes Mr. Hutton] by whatever test you will, . . . *Marmion* will remain his finest poem. The battle of Flodden Field touches his highest point in its expression of stern patriotic feeling, in its passionate love of daring, and in the force and swiftness of its movement, no less than in the brilliancy of its romantic interests, the charm of its picturesque detail, and the glow of its scenic coloring. No poet ever equalled Scott in the description of wild and simple scenes and the expression of wild and simple feelings."

One of Scott's most popular ballads is found in the fifth canto of *Marmion*. What young heart has not thrilled at the stirring lines of Lady Heron's song, *Lochinvar?* In the last canto are found the lines more frequently quoted, perhaps, than any others ever written by Scott:

"O, woman, in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!"

It was with some fear that Scott could not repeat the successes of his previous poems that his friends heard, about two years after the publication of *Marmion*, that *The Lady of the*

Lake was to make its appearance. Jeffrey, the critic, predicted that it would be read oftener than either of the former two. Lockhart thinks it "the most interesting, romantic, picturesque and graceful of his great poems." Scott's descriptions of the lower Highlands were so much enjoyed that this once obscure region now became the haunt of the tourist. It is a remarkable fact that the popularity of this poem has transformed the social and industrial life of the region the poet described; for the influx of thousands of visitors has changed, for better or worse, the primitive simplicity of the inhabitants.

Homes and Friends. — Shortly after his marriage he took a house at Lasswade, a place on the Esk about six miles from Edinburgh. Here he remained until 1804. Four years after he had moved away he took a friend out of his way to show the place. Said he, —

"I have been bringing you where there is little enough to be seen only that Scotch cottage, but though not worth looking at, I could not pass it. It was our first country house when newly married, and many a contrivance it had to make it comfortable. I made a dining-table for it with my own hands."

He next resided at Ashestiel, as he calls it in his *Marmion* introductions. Here he entered upon his duties as sheriff, and worked hard at his literary labors.

Scott was a tremendously hard worker; had he not had nerves of iron, he would have broken down long before he did. That he had iron nerves is evident from this story: One night he came to a tavern where all the rooms were occupied. There was a vacant bed in a room in which lay a corpse. Scott asked whether the man had died of any contagious disease. Upon a negative answer being given, he took the vacant bed and slept soundly through the night.

At Ashestiel he rose at five o'clock and began his work.

"Arrayed in his shooting-jacket, or whatever dress he meant to use till dinner-time, he was seated at his desk by six o'clock, all his papers arranged before him in the most accurate order, and his books of reference marshalled around him on the floor, while at least one favorite dog

ay watching his eye, just beyond the line of circumvallation. Thus by the ime the family assembled for breakfast, between nine and ten, he had done enough, in his own language, 'to break the neck of the day's work.' After breakfast a couple of hours more were given to his solitary tasks, and by noon he was, as he used to say, his 'own man.' When the weather was bad, he would labor incessantly all the morning; but the general rule was to be out and on horseback by one o'clock at the latest."

During his life at Ashestiel his literary labors included the writing of his three most popular long poems, a part of *The Bride of Triermain,* part of *Rokeby,* the editing of eighteen volumes of the works of Dryden, as well as the writing of a *Life of Dryden,* the editing of thirteen volumes of *Somers's Collection of Tracts, Sir Ralph Sadler's Life, Letters, and State Papers,* in three volumes, and three or four similar works.

In May, 1812, he moved to Abbotsford, the place forever associated, both pleasantly and ruinously, with the name of Scott. He had just obtained the salary of the Clerkship of Session, which now gave him, with his other sources of revenue, not counting his literary emoluments, an income of £2,000 a year. The place was bought for £4,000, half of which was borrowed and the other half raised on the security of an unwritten poem. This sum can not be considered an extravagant sum for a man with the income and ability of Scott. But this was but a small part of the cost of Abbotsford. Mr. Lockhart tells us that by the time of the great failure in Scott's fortunes £29,000 had been expended on the place.

His first purchase was a farm consisting of a fertile meadow along the Tweed and about 100 acres of undulating ground, "all in a neglected state, undrained, wretchedly inclosed, much of it covered with nothing better than the native heath." The farmhouse itself was in poor condition, but Scott planned at once the building of a cottage for his own use. He liked the place because he was charmed by the possibilities of making it into a beautiful estate on the banks of the Tweed — "flowing broad and bright over a bed of milkwhite pebbles." For years one of his chief recreations was the planting of trees. The modest cottage of his first plan grew until it became a villa of baronial proportions, a

"romance in stone and lime." After Scott's death the place, upon which he had lavished so much care and money, for a time fell into neglect, until, in 1853, Mr. Hope-Scott, the husband of Lockhart's daughter, having come into possession, restored its former beauty.

Among Scott's best friends were William Clerk, William Erskine, John Leyden, James Hogg, William Laidlaw, John Gibson Lockhart, his son-in-law, the two Ballantynes, the publishers, and his servant, Tom Purdie. Clerk was a man of strong intellect but slothful disposition. He is the original of Darsie Latimer in *Redgauntlet*— "whence we should suppose him to have been a lively, generous, susceptible, contentious, and rather helter-skelter young man, much alive to the ludicrous in all situations, very eager to see life in all its phases." Erskine was a barrister who later in life became Lord Kinnedder; a man of delicate sensibilities and good taste. The poetical letter used as the introduction to the third canto of *Marmion* is addressed to Erskine. His friend had asked Scott to essay more ambitious tasks. Scott replies,

> "For me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask
> The classic poet's well-conn'd task?
> Nay, Erskine, nay — On the wild hill
> Let the wild heath-bell flourish still."

Leyden was a vigorous personality "who once walked between forty and fifty miles and back for the sole purpose of visiting an old person who possessed a copy of a border ballad that was wanting for the *Minstrelsy*." James Hogg was the eccentric Ettrick Shepherd whose poetry was better than his manners. Laidlaw was his farmer-friend who managed his estate at Abbotsford and sometimes wrote from dictation some of Scott's novels. Tom Purdie was his faithful servant, who sometimes tyrannized over Scott in the manner of a loved servant.

"What a blessing there is [wrote Scott in his diary when calamities had overtaken him] in a fellow like Tom, whom no familiarity can spoil, whom you may scold and praise and joke with, knowing the quality of the man is unalterable in his love and reverence to his master."

James and John Ballantyne were the two brothers with whose ublishing business Scott became unfortunately allied. James ad been a schoolfellow. He is described as an honest man with high sense of his own importance. Scott's humorous name for im was Aldiborontiphoscophornio. John, who was clever but issipated, he called Rigdumfunnidos.

Becomes a Novelist.—Had Scott written poetry only he ould remain among the lesser lights of English literature. oday his fame rests principally upon his fiction. He became novelist because Byron's fame began to eclipse the glory of the lder poet. With characteristic modesty Scott said that "Byron it the mark where he did not even pretend to fledge his arrow;" n the other hand, Byron always looked upon Scott's genius as reeminent. It is pleasant to read in Byron's *Journal:*

"Scott is certainly the most wonderful writer of the day. His novels re a new literature in themselves, and his poetry as good as any—if not etter (only on an erroneous system)—and only ceased to be so popular ecause the vulgar were tired of hearing 'Aristides called the Just,' and cott the Best, and ostracised him. I like him, too, for his manliness of haracter, for the extreme pleasantness of his conversation, and his good ature towards myself personally. May he prosper! for he deserves it. know no reading to which I fall with such alacrity as a work of W. cott's."

In 1814 *Waverley* appeared anonymously. He had started he work in 1805 and then had laid it aside. For reasons which re somewhat vague, he had decided not to affix his name, and onsequently he remained incognito until in 1827 he made a public nnouncement at a great banquet. But the discerning critics nmediately after the reading of *Waverley* suspected Scott of he authorship.

"Have you read Walter Scott's *Waverley* [wrote Mary R. Mitford a friend]? I have ventured to say 'Walter Scott's,' though I hear he enies it, just as a young girl denies the imputation of a lover; but, if here be any belief in internal evidence, it must be his."

A few days after the publication of *Waverley* Scott took a acation trip among the Western Isles, and was gone two months.

On his return he was gratified to learn that two editions had been sold, that a third was in the press. It is not remarkable that the success of this new form of composition induced him to an immediate trial of another of the same character. *Guy Mannering* appeared in 1815. That inexorable critic, Jeffrey, thought that Dandie Dinmont was the best rustic portrait that had ever been set before the public; that Meg Merrilies was akin to the witches of *Macbeth,* a very imposing and emphatic person.

From 1814 to 1831, roundly speaking, he wrote thirty novels and long stories. Which of these is the greatest is a matter of personal opinion. Mr. Lowell has said that *The Bride of Lammermoor* was the most beautiful story in the language; Mr. Lang places *Old Mortality* and *Quentin Durward* at the head of the list; Mr. Hutton also thinks that *Old Mortality* is the best. The most widely read, it seems to me, is *Ivanhoe.* *Ivanhoe* is especially attractive to the young. If one can have the privilege of reading but one of Scott's novels, *Ivanhoe* should be that novel. It is true there are artificialities and absurdities in *Ivanhoe,* for it is impossible for any one to write a correct historical novel, but there are compensations that outweigh the defects. It is the matured critic, rather than the young reader, who places such a high estimate upon realism in fiction. As Mr. Lang says, "*Ivanhoe* is such a very dear and old friend that no one who has ever been a boy can pretend to apply to it any stern critical tests." If one can read a half dozen or more of the novels, it would be well to add to those already mentioned *Kenilworth, Rob Roy, The Talisman,* and *The Heart of Midlothian.*

This is the order in which the novels appeared:

1814, *Waverley;* 1815, *Guy Mannering;* 1816, *The Antiquary, The Black Dwarf, Old Mortality;* 1818, *Rob Roy, The Heart of Midlothian;* 1819, *The Bride of Lammermoor, The Legend of Montrose, Ivanhoe;* 1820, *The Monastery, The Abbot;* 1821, *Kenilworth;* 1822, *The Pirate;* 1823, *Peveril of the Peak, Quentin Durward;* 1824, *St. Ronan's Well, Redgauntlet;* 1825, *The Betrothed, The Talisman;* 1826, *Woodstock, Chronicles of the Canongate;* 1828, *The Fair Maid of Perth;* 1829, *Anne of*

Geierstein, 1831, *Count Robert of Paris, Castle Dangerous.* Remarkable as such a record of productivity is, it does not tell the whole tale. Much other literary work was done; for instance, the *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte,* in nine volumes, appeared in 1827.

The entire series of novels may be divided into three classes, as has been done by Mr. Yonge: those dealing with Scotch life and manners; those that deal with some well-known event or character in history — Scottish, English, or Continental — and those that are a combination, being both Scottish and historical.

Class 1. — *Guy Mannering, Rob Roy, The Black Dwarf, The Heart of Midlothian, The Bride of Lammermoor, The Pirate, St. Ronan's Well, Chronicles of the Canongate* (First Series), *The Fair Maid of Perth.*

Class 2. — *Ivanhoe, Kenilworth, Fortunes of Nigel, Peveril of the Peak, Quentin Durward, The Talisman, The Betrothed, Woodstock, Anne of Geierstein, Count Robert of Paris.*

Class 3. — *Waverley, Old Mortality, The Legend of Montrose, Redgauntlet, Castle Dangerous.*

In Adversity. — The year 1826 was full of trouble for our author: In January he received news of the failure of the publishing house of Constable, and within four months of this failure his wife died. The story of the failure of Constable, and of the printing firm of Ballantyne and Co., is too complicated to be told at this place. Suffice it to say that Scott, at the age of fifty-five, with the vigor of youth gone, and his maturity weakened by the strain of overwork, felt himself burdened with the appalling debt of £117,000. That he felt the terribleness of the blow we know from the records found in his own diary; that his resolution to do all that a man could to pay the debt was lived up to with almost superhuman industry and ability, we know by the records of the last few years of his life. Lovable in his prosperity, he was magnificent in his adversity. Great as a poet, greater as the weaver of thrilling and beautiful romances, he was greatest as a man.

"Till calamity came [writes Mr. Hutton] Scott appeared to be a nearly complete natural man, and no more. Then first was perceived in him something above nature, something which could endure though every end in life for which he had fought so boldly should be defeated — something which could endure and more than endure, which could shoot a soft transparence of its own through his years of darkness and decay. That there was nothing very elevated in Scott's personal or moral, or political or literary ends, . . . that he lived to some extent like a child blowing soap-bubbles, the brightest and most gorgeous of which — the Abbotsford bubble — vanished before his eyes, is not a take-off from the charm of his career, but adds to it the very specialty of its fascination. For it was his entire unconsciousness of moral or spiritual efforts, the simple, straightforward way in which he labored for ends of the most ordinary kind, which made it clear how much greater the man was than his ends, how great was the man and character which prosperity failed to display, but which became visible at once so soon as the storm came down and the night fell."

It is pleasant to know that many of his friends rushed to his assistance, one admirer offering to place £30,000 to his credit, but he refused all aid. Scott was intensely proud, not vain or fond of flattery, but proud. "If he lived," he said, "and retained his health, no man should lose a penny by him." At first he dreaded giving up Abbotsford; "he had walked his last on the domain he had planted, sat the last time in the halls he had built." But this he was not obliged to do; his creditors, admiring his honesty and courage, spared him this humiliation. Upon receipt of the news of his loss he wrote in his diary:

"January 17th. — James Ballantyne this morning, good honest fellow, with a visage as black as the crook. He hopes no salvation; has, indeed, taken measures to stop. It is hard, after having fought such a battle, I have apologized for not attending the Royal Society Club, who have a *gaudeamus* on this day, and seemed to count much on my being *præses*. My old acquaintance, Miss Elizabeth Clerk, sister of Willie, died suddenly. I cannot choose but wish it had been Sir W. S., and yet the feeling is unmanly. I have Anne, my wife, and Charles to look after. I felt rather sneaking as I came home from the Parliament-house — felt as if I were liable *monstrari digito* in no very pleasant way. But this must be borne *cum cæteris;* and, thank God, however uncomfortable, I do not feel despondent."

Scott's literary earnings had been enormous, unprecedented in the history of English literature. When he published *Waverley,* a new venture, Constable had offered him £700, an amount which Scott refused, saying it was too much if the novel should not prove successful, and too little if it should. That Constable had been generous in his offer is evident from Lockhart's assertion that Miss Edgeworth, Scott's successful contemporary, had never received a tithe of that amount for one novel. Yet within the first year of its publication publisher and author, who shared the profits, had each made over £1,000 from the sales of *Waverley,* and by 1821 eight editions had appeared.

Without going into detail as to the various profits on his writings, we may say that Scott probably earned with his pen the enormous sum of £140,000. For *Woodstock* alone he received over £8,000, and his *Life of Napoleon,* the first and second editions, produced for his creditors £18,000. From the close of 1825 to June, 1827, his literary industry had enabled him to pay his creditors £28,000. Had he lived he could have paid off his enormous debt within eight or nine years after the failure; as it was, his creditors were paid in full by the copyrights that brought in their revenues after the author's death.

Last Days. — No man, however rugged, could stand the pace set by such a worker as Scott. Knowing his persistent industry, especially after his desire to meet his money obligations, one is not surprised to learn that the wizard's brain gave way, a slight stroke of paralysis impairing his mental powers in 1831. With a timely generosity too rarely recorded in the history of nations, the English government placed a warship at his disposal, urging him to seek health in a trip on the Mediterranean. Scott consented, all the more readily because he at times enjoyed the delusion that he had paid off all his debt. His stay in Italy was brief; depressed by the news of the death of Goethe, he longed to be back at Abbotsford. "Alas! for Goethe," he cried, "but he at least died at home."

His delight on his return as he came in sight of his home was pathetic. The familiar scenes aroused him from a stupor into

which the fatigue of the journey had thrown him, and his joy became almost beyond control. When he was carried into the house and placed upon his bed, he sat bewildered until his eye fell on Laidlaw, the manager of his estate: "Ha! Willie Laidlaw! O man, how often have I thought of you!" And then we have a picture of his faithful dogs fawning upon him and licking his hands, while the great man in his weakness sobbed and smiled over them, until like a weary child he fell asleep.

Lockhart's tender and beautiful description of Scott's end deserves to be quoted in full:

"As I was dressing on the morning of Monday the 17th of September, Nicolson came into my room, and told me that his master had awoke in a state of composure and consciousness, and wished to see me immediately. I found him entirely himself, though in the last extreme of feebleness. His eye was clear and calm — every trace of the wild fire of delirium extinguished. 'Lockhart,' he said, 'I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man — be virtuous — be religious — be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here.' He paused, and I said, 'Shall I send for Sophia and Anne?' 'No,' said he, 'don't disturb them. Poor souls! I know they were up all night — God bless you all.' With this he sunk into a very tranquil sleep, and, indeed, he scarcely afterwards gave any sign of consciousness, except for an instant on the arrival of his sons. They, on learning that the scene was about to close, obtained a new leave of absence from their posts, and both reached Abbotsford on the 19th. About half-past one P. M., on the 21st of September, Sir Walter breathed his last, in the presence of all his children. It was a beautiful day — so warm that every window was wide open — and so perfectly still that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes."

Qualities as a Writer. — Scott was not a man who took infinite pains to acquire style; although most prolific of writers, he was not a bookish man, as was Stevenson, or Pater, or Milton; in his attitude towards literature he was more like Chaucer and Shakspere. Scott cared more for Abbotsford, for his dogs and his horses, than for literary criticism. Not that he thought himself above criticism — "I value your criticism as much as ever," he writes to a friend, "but the worst is my faults are better

nown to myself than to you." A man who published three long ovels in a year had no time to polish his sentences; therefore we eed not look to Scott for that subtle discrimination in the choice f words, that striking combination of words and phrases, found n the great masters of style. Some of his best novels were written n the shortest time, while in imagination he heard the "thumping, attering, and banging" of the printing press. The chief charm f his style is its naturalness; he writes well, though not bril- antly; neither his prose nor his poetry furnish many notable ayings; "there are few purple patches in his writings; . . . he carcely ever utters a thought which illumines the depths of ings." He has not the Shaksperean instinct for style — but, en, very few have.

Nor is Scott a master in the making of plot, and we usually ust read through a long introduction before we come to the ory itself. The lack of a coherent plot may be due to the apidity with which he composed. With less assurance as to is fertility of imagination, he would have been obliged to outline is story before he plunged into it. The very richness of his quipment made him careless where a lesser mind would have een careful. In his Introductory Epistle to *The Fortunes of Nigel,* he has confessed to an inability to keep to a plan:

"I have repeatedly . . . endeavored to construct a story which I meant ould evolve itself gradually and strikingly, maintain suspense, and stimu- te curiosity; and which finally should terminate in a striking catastrophe. ut I think there is a demon who seats himself on the feather of my pen hen I begin to write, and leads it astray from the purpose. Characters xpand under my hand; incidents are multiplied; the story lingers, while y materials increase; my regular mansion turns out a Gothic anomaly, nd the work is closed long before I have attained the purpose I proposed."

A third criticism is that he is lacking in psychological interest, eaning that he does not have the power to analyze character; at his men and women, especially his more important person- ges, are uninteresting. It is true that Scott describes the pageant f life rather than the forces, the emotions and reflection, that ause the pageant. Had he written *Hamlet* we should have a

brilliant description of the court of Denmark; Rosencranz and Guildenstern would have been delineated in a characteristic and interesting episode, but Hamlet and Ophelia would have played a minor part, and no glimpse whatever would we have had of the soul of Hamlet. After reading *Guy Mannering,* who can forget Dandie Dinmont and Meg Merrilies and Dominie Sampson, and who can remember the ostensible main story of Vanbeest Brown and Julia Mannering?

But his excellencies were greater than his faults. "Scott at his worst excels all others at their best," writes Saintsbury in discussing his imitators, whose number is legion. Scott himself has given us his own comment on the difference between himself and his imitators. In 1826 he wrote:

"I take up again my remarks on imitators. I am sure I mean the gentlemen no wrong by calling them so, and heartily wish they had followed a better model. . . . One advantage, I think, I still have over all of them. They may do their fooling with better grace; but I, like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, do it more natural. They have to read old books, and consult antiquarian collections, to get their knowledge; I write because I have long since read such works, and possess, thanks to a strong memory, the information which they have to seek for. This leads to a dragging-in historical details by head and shoulders, so that the interest of the main piece is lost in minute descriptions of events which do not affect its progress. . . . In my better efforts, while I conducted my story through the agency of historical personages, and by connecting it with historical incidents, I have endeavored to weave them pretty closely together, and in future I will study this more. Must not let the background eclipse the principal figures — the framework overpower the picture.

"Another thing in my favor is that my contemporaries steal too openly. Mr. Smith has inserted in *Brambletye House* whole pages from De Foe's *Fire and Plague* of London.

> 'Steal! foh! a fico for the phrase —
> Convey, the wise it call.'

"When I *convey* an incident or so, I am at as much pains to avoid detection as if the offence could be indicted at the Old Bailey. . . . There is one way to give novelty — to depend for success on the interest of a well-contrived story. But, wie's me! that requires thought, consideration — above all, the adhering to one — which I never can do, for the

as rise as I write, and bear such a disproportioned extent to that which ch occupied at the first concoction, that (cocksnowns) I shall never be le to take the trouble."

Wholesomeness. — Deficiencies in style, in plot structure, in btle analysis of character, were forgotten, and are still forgotten, readers who find in his fiction a wholesome interpretation of e. What do we find in Scott? As the writer of historical mance he is the creator of a new species of literature. Out of e abundance of his antiquarian lore he has made the past live, d that without the effort that smacks of pedantry. His "local lor" is convincing. Not that it is always true. His errors n be exposed by the erudite historian, but so can Shakspere's. the *Antiquary* he causes the huge disk of the sun to set in the ean off the east coast of Scotland, and he twists some of the cts of history to suit his needs; but Shakspere was guilty of ving Bohemia a sea-coast and of making clocks strike in the ne of Julius Caesar. How many thousands owe their interest the medieval history of Europe, not to the accurate and dull storian, but to the brilliant writer of *The Talisman* and *Ivan-e?* He has peopled the past with living human beings.

Scott is more than a romanticist who has made the past live charming descriptions of the pageantry of court, the tilt of urnament, the march and battle of crusader; he has given accu-te, realistic pictures of contemporary Scotch life. In fiction e *Old Mortality* and *The Heart of Midlothian* he is a realist. s power to delineate the life and manners of the poor has never en questioned. Though he fails in the highest gift of the eative artist, the power to create a man or woman who becomes real as Hamlet and Portia, his characters are not individualized some tricksy mannerism of phrase or gesture, as is often the se with Dickens. Scott's great characters may be "wooden," t many of his subsidiary characters are creations that almost tch a Dogberry or a Touchstone. This is due to his broad manity. The largeness of his nature included sympathies ich caused him to be idolized not only by his servants, but en by his dogs and horses, and at one time by a discriminating

pig! In his head he was an uncompromising Tory; in his hea he was the most tolerant of democrats.

Lastly, his novels have the great virtue of wholesomenes They breathe the freshness of the open Scotch heather; lik Chaucer and Shakspere, he had too much sanity to view li from the lazar-house or hospital for incurables. He also — an this was perhaps due to the simplicity of his nature — refraine from preaching. He presents his picture of life; there it is, h seems to say, draw your own conclusion. He did at one tim say, "I am, I own, no great believer in the moral utility to b derived from fictitious compositions." Yet his method is th most effective of methods for teaching morality. It is the metho of the greatest artists; the method, in fact, of life itself. N one can read the fiction of Scott without feeling the wholesom morality that pervades every page. That his philosophy of li was not the ideal of the cheap moralist is seen in his introductio to an edition of *Ivanhoe* appearing ten years after the first editio It is a reply to some criticism on his disposal of Rebecca:

"The character of the fair Jewess found so much favor in the ey of some fair readers, that the writer was censured, because, when arran ing the fates of the characters of the drama, he had not assigned the ha of Wilfred to Rebecca, rather than the less interesting Rowena. But, n to mention that the prejudices of the age rendered such a union almo impossible, the author may, in passing, observe that he thinks a charact of a highly virtuous and lofty stamp is degraded rather than exalted an attempt to reward virtue with temporal prosperity, . . and it is dangerous and fatal doctrine to teach young persons, the most comm readers of romance, that rectitude of conduct and of principle are eith naturally allied with, or adequately rewarded by, the gratification of o passions, or attainment of our wishes."

As a Man. — Scott is one of the very few men in the histo of English literature whose life and personality are so free fro idiosyncrasies and faults that no apology need be written. Whe can another man so wholesome and well-balanced be found He is an irrefutable argument against the doctrine that geni and irregularity must go together. He worked too hard, a he was proud; these are his faults! And his hard work h

given us his *Waverley Novels,* while his pride led him to the heroic efforts to pay off an enormous debt contracted by the mismanagement of others.

The first and severest test of a man's character is in his relationship to his own family. Scott was an obedient son, a loving husband, and affectionate father. Although when he married he may not have been able to give his wife the first passion of his youth, there is evidence that his affection was more beautiful and enduring than the passionate matrimonial love of many another man of letters. Two years after his wife's death, on visiting at Carlisle, he wrote, "A sad place in my domestic remembrances, since here I married my poor Charlotte. She is gone, and I am following — faster, perhaps, than I wot of. It is something to have lived and loved."

Generous to a fault in his hospitality, for he kept open-house at Abbotsford, he was equally generous in that more difficult phase of hospitality — his relationship to his brothers in letters. Byron's popularity as a poet eclipsed Scott, but Scott stood the test so well that Byron dedicated his *Cain* to him. To his weaker competitors Scott was always a ready helper, aiding both by his purse and his influence. The heroic quality in the man has been touched upon in another paragraph.

To do justice to the character of Scott would require more space than we dare take. We may conclude in the language of Mr. Dawson:

"He was simply a large-hearted and humane man of the world; ... a lover of life and his kind, who took life generously and heartily; a man of instinctive virtue, of genial sanity, of great depth and sweetness of disposition, of quiet but authentic heroism in the hour of trial; one of the truly great men of the world, because he was so much a child, and kept the child-like heart of love and simplicity, of natural piety and joy, to the last. He wrote according to his nature, and being by nature great, in spite of all his faults, he has written in a great way, and has left behind him a beloved and imperishable memory.

"He makes friends with all men through his books, as he did in his life, by virtue of his geniality, his shrewd good sense, his warm appreciation of all that is best in human nature, his comprehension of its hidden valours, and his sympathy with its frailties."

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CHAPTER XV

Dickens

TO make millions laugh and weep, and while making them laugh and weep to arouse them, by the sincerity of his appeal, to the need of bringing about reforms in the laws and customs of a nation, was the work of Charles Dickens. Neither a deep thinker nor a philosopher, a stylist nor a scholar, by the sheer force of his genial heart and alert mind he has so interested all classes that his name has become a household word from India and Australia to Canada and Louisiana — in fact, wherever the art of reading the English language is practiced. His characters like Pickwick, Sam Weller, and Micawber have taken hold of the English mind so firmly that they are known as familiarly as Hamlet, Falstaff, and Shylock. "He was the Hogarth of literature," writes Herbert Paul, "painting with a broad brush, never ashamed of caricature, but always an artist, and not a dauber."

Birth and Parents. — Charles John Huffman Dickens was born at Landport, Portsea, February 7, 1812. John Dickens, the father, held a clerkship in the Navy Pay Office, and when Charles was born was employed in the Portsmouth Dockyard. When Charles, the second child and the oldest son in a family which afterwards numbered eight children, was two years old, the father was recalled to London, and two years later the family migrated to Chatham, near the old city of Rochester. In later years the fancy of Dickens loved to revert to this neighborhood "of chalk hills and deep green lanes and woodlands and marshes." In *Pickwick* Mr. Jingle discourses upon the fame and virtues of Rochester; at Chatham little David Copperfield passed a night in sleep "near a cannon, happy in the society of the sentry's footsteps." Near Rochester is the house of Gadshill where Dickens

spent the last years of his life, and at Rochester is the scene of his last novel, the unfinished *Edwin Drood*.

Much has been written about the influence of mothers upon men of genius, and many examples can be cited of men who born amid untoward circumstances have owed all to the finer instincts and loving devotion of a mother. Of the mother of Dickens we do not know much; what little Dickens himself has written about her is not especially favorable. He always resented that it was his mother who opposed his quitting his child labor of pasting labels on blacking-pots. John Dickens, the father, as is generally understood, is the original of the immortal Micawber. Charming as is the generous, grandiloquent, impecunious Micawber, one may question the delicacy of taste that prompts a son to give this "bad eminence" to a father. In translating fiction into fact one dare not be too literal, and we must not forget that Micawber is not the father of Dickens. John Dickens was not devoid of those virtues which endear a father to his children. From him Dickens likely caught that happy optimism which permeates even the most wretched scenes of his fiction. The son's own testimony is that the father was industrious, patient, loyal to his friends, "as kind-hearted and generous a man as ever lived in the world." His one defect was that he belonged to the unfortunate race who cannot, or at least do not, pay their debts. In middle life we find Dickens saying that as he grew older, the more highly he thought of his father; and it is pleasant to record that when the celebrated author was prospering he made careful provision for his father's comfort.

Childhood Days.—In the year 1821 the family moved to London, taking residence in Bayham Street, Camden Town. Owing to the inability of the father to pay his debts, the lot of the family was not a happy one. The boy Dickens was obliged to work for six shillings a week in a warehouse among sordid companions, an experience so humiliating to the sensitive boy that in later years he never mentioned it to any one, not even his wife, except to his intimate friend and biographer, Forster. In a fragment of autobiography he writes:

"It is wonderful to me that, even after my descent into the poor little judge I had been since we came to London, no one had compassion ough on me — a child of singular abilities, quick, eager, delicate, and on hurt, bodily or mentally — to suggest that something might have en spared, as certainly it might have been, to place me at any common hool. Our friends, I take it, were tired out. No one made any sign. y father and mother were quite satisfied. They could hardly have en more so, if I had been twenty years of age, distinguished at a ammar school, and going to Cambridge."

To get at his own impressions of his childhood one should ead *David Copperfield,* his favorite novel, for there we have ong with the *Dichtung* considerable of the *Wahrheit* of his ildhood days. Like David he had been poor and neglected, nd forced to work in mean surroundings; like him he knew the ppressiveness of duns and debts and the misery within the walls here men were imprisoned for debt.

Education. — His mother, be it said to her credit, had taught im to read, and with his sister Fanny, in his early days, he had ttended a day school kept by a William Giles. And later in ondon when twelve years of age he attended an ordinary day chool. But the schooldays of Dickens must be counted by nonths rather than by years, for in the conventional sense he ad but little education. In his day the lack of a "classical ducation" was felt to be more of a detriment than it is today, nd of a highly sensitive nature he always wished to be con- idered a well-educated man. In his earlier writings, however, e ridicules the pretensions of the classically educated. Mr. eeder, Dr. Blimber, and Dr. Strong are satirized. In his later ritings, after his own sons have been educated in the traditional nanner, he portrays a classical tutor, Mr. Crisparkle in *Edwin Drood,* as a gentleman of sense and culture.

In the real sense of the word, Dickens, like Washington and incoln, Shakspere and Bunyan, was a very well educated man. He knew how to subdue his environment for the purposes he ad in view. He learned from life rather than from books, and hat he learned he assimilated. London with its courts and ails, blacking warehouses and tenements, schools and homes and

shops, theaters, clubs, and streets was the encyclopaedia of lif whose pages he diligently conned. It is always dangerous t speculate what a man would have been had his training an environment been different. It is highly probable that Dickens both as man and artist, would have had more of balance had h had a liberal education, but it is also probable that a wide acquaintance with the great masters of the past, and a min disciplined by the rigors of a classical education, would hav produced a different Dickens. But who is so hardy as to asser that a different Dickens would have been a greater Dickens?

Dickens was never a wide reader. As a child, however, h read books of travel and tales like the *Arabian Nights*. To thi must be added the works of Fielding and Smollett, Cervante and Le Sage, a strange diet for a child of eight or nine. It i fortunate that the natural innocence of a child's mind carries it own antiseptic for much of the poison that lurks in some of th great literature of the past, for otherwise he might have bee tainted with vulgarity and indecency. From *David Copperfiel* and other sources we get a catalog of the books which he rea in his youth — *Roderick Random, Peregrine Pickle, Humphre Clinker, Tom Jones, The Vicar of Wakefield, Don Quixote, Gi Blas, Robinson Crusoe, The Arabian Nights,* and *Tale of th Genii;* also the essays in *The Idler, The Tattler, The Spectato The Citizen of the World,* and a *Collection of Farces* edited b Mrs. Inchbald.

A Reporter. — Before May, 1827, he had entered the offic of a solicitor in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and on this date we fin him entering the office of another solicitor in Gray's Inn at salary of thirteen shillings and sixpence a week. Here h remained a year and a half, after which he entered upon th work of a reporter. Whatever Dickens undertook to do, whethe pasting labels on blacking pots or giving public readings, he di with his whole might. Consequently we find him learning short hand and devoting hours to general reading in the Britis Museum that he might become a first-class reporter. Late i life, in 1865, when presiding at a public dinner given in behalf o

the Newspaper Press Fund, he gave this account of his reportorial experience:

"I have pursued the calling of a reporter under circumstances of which many of my brethren at home in England here, many of my modern successors, can form no adequate conception. I have often transcribed for the printer, from my shorthand notes, important public speeches, in which the strictest accuracy was required, and a mistake in which would have been, to a young man, severely compromising, writing on the palm of my hand, by the light of a dark lantern, in a post chaise and four, galloping through a wild country, and through the dead of the night, at the surprising rate of fifteen miles an hour. . . . I have worn my knees by writing on them on the old back row of the old gallery in the old House of Commons; and I have worn my feet by standing to write in a preposterous pen in the old House of Lords, where we used to be huddled together like so many sheep, kept in waiting, say, until the woolsack might want restuffing. Returning home from excited political meetings in the country to the waiting press in London, I do verily believe I have been upset in almost every description of vehicle known in this country. I have been in my time belated in miry by-roads, towards the small hours, forty or fifty miles from London, in a wheelless carriage, with exhausted horses, and drunken postboys, and have got back in time for publication, to be received with never-forgotten compliments by the late Mr. Black, coming in the broadest of Scotch from the broadest of hearts I ever knew."

Beginnings as Writer.—A Dinner at Poplar Walk, afterwards changed to *Mr. Minns and His Cousin,* published in the *Monthly Magazine,* December, 1833, is his first story in print. By February, 1835, ten of his stories had appeared in the same magazine. To one of these papers he had signed the name of "Boz," the nickname of one of his brothers. The first remuneration for his stories was that received for his contributions to the *Evening Chronicle.* His salary for his regular work on the *Morning Chronicle,* a paper published by the same firm that issued the *Evening Chronicle,* was increased from five to seven guineas a week. These stories were collected and published in two volumes in 1836 under the title, *Sketches by Boz.* For the copyright the author received £150.

As might be expected the *Sketches* lack the finish of his later work; but they contain the germ of his future mastery of middle class London life.

"Hardly a topic associated with Dickens in his maturity [writes Mr. Gissing] is missing from the earliest attempts. . . . To the lower middle class, a social status so peculiarly English, so rich in virtues yet so provocative of satire, he by origin belonged; in its atmosphere he always breathed most freely, and had the largest command of his humorous resources. . . . No one, indeed, had ever made such use as this of material taken from the very dust-heap of decent London life; such common paltry stuff of the town, yet here so truthfully described, with such intimate touches, such glimpses of mirthful motive, as come only from the hand of the born artist. Veracity I take to be the high merit of these sketches."

On April 2, 1836, Dickens was married to Catharine Hogarth, the daughter of a newspaper man connected with the *Chronicle*. After living together for more than twenty years they separated in May, 1858, Dickens granting his wife an allowance of £600 a year. He wrote to Forster:

"Poor Catharine and I are not made for each other, and there is no help for it. It is not only that she makes me uneasy and unhappy, but that I make her so too, and much more so. She is exactly what you know in the way of being amiable and complying; but we are strangely ill-sorted for the bond that is between us. . . . Her temperament will not go with mine."

Pickwick.—Men of ordinary talent plod to the mastery of their art through a long and laborious apprenticeship, men of genius seem to attain fulness of power at a single bound. Dickens belongs to the latter class. With the publication of *Pickwick* he entered upon the highroad of fame and worldly prosperity. At this time Disraeli, Bulwer, Ainsworth, and Marryat were the leaders in fiction; in poetry Tennyson and Browning were but little more than names, and Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus,* though published, had made its appeal but to the chosen few. With *Pickwick* the English-speaking world recognized that a new planet had swum into its ken and all eyes were turned to the new light in the literary world. As to the personal appearance of Dickens at this time Carlyle himself has given us one of his inimitable sketches:

"He is a fine little fellow — Boz — I think. Clear, blue, intelligent eyes, eyebrows that he arches amazingly, large protrusive rather loose

outh, a face of most extreme *mobility,* which he shuttles about — eye-ows, eyes, mouth, and all — in a very singular manner while speaking. irmount this with a loose coil of common-colored hair, and set it on a nall compact figure, very small, and dressed à la D'Orsay rather than ell — this is Pickwick. For the rest, a quiet, shrewd-looking little fellow, no seems to guess pretty well what he is and what others are."

Dickens himself has told us the history of the origin of *Pick-ick.* Chapman and Hall, publishers, observing the popularity f the *Sketches,* came to Dickens with the request that he write omething to accompany the monthly illustrations of Mr. R. eymour, a caricaturist of some merit. Dickens, unwilling to ay a secondary part, persuaded Mr. Hall to allow him to write he story which Mr. Seymour was to illustrate. Before the econd number was published Mr. Seymour had died by his own and, and another illustrator had to be secured. For his work ickens was to receive fourteen pounds a month. The first issue ppeared in the spring of 1836. Though the first number tracted but little attention, by the time the fifteenth appeared he advance orders had risen from the original of 400 copies to 0,000. It is estimated that the publishers, who in the early ages of the monthly numbers considered the abandonment of he project, eventually made £20,000 from *Pickwick.* Dickens mself, according to the publishers, received £3000.

Pickwick has always been a great favorite with readers of ickens. Lord Campbell said that he would rather have written *ickwick* than be Chief Justice of England. Frederic Harrison inks that it is "his first, his best, his inimitable triumph," and at its drollery, human nature, originality, and vitality place it a class by itself. What are the elements that constitute the harm of this rambling, ill-constructed account of the adventures a London Club? Plot there is none, for the story has neither ginning, middle, or end; the characters border upon caricatures, nd yet the book is great in the sense in which *Don Quixote* is reat. In *Pickwick,* his first great triumph, we have the same ualities which characterize the later work of Dickens, abounding tality, broad humor, and a wholesome optimism.

Pickwick and his coterie are not dyspeptic philosophers who look upon life with Byronic cynicism. To them life was intensely interesting because they were intensely interested in all its common pleasures. Their humor is not of the delicate, subtle variety characteristic of Lamb and Washington Irving; it is broad, at times farcical, but never offensive because of vulgarity. Genial and wholesome, it never makes light of things we hold sacred.

"We have here [writes Mr. Marzials] no acrid critic sneeringly pointing out the plague spots of humanity, and showing pleasantly how even the good are tainted with evil. Rather does Dickens delight in finding some touch of goodness, some lingering memory of better things, some helpful aspiration, some trace of unselfish devotion in character where all seems saddened and lost. In brief, the laughter is the laughter of one who sees the foibles, and even the vices of his fellow men, and yet looks on them lovingly and helpfully."

Although the characters are portrayed in what the Greeks called "in excess," yet he succeeded in creating men who have an individuality which places Dickens high on the roll of those who have been the creators of real men and women. Pickwick and Sam Weller, in the estimation of the English-speaking race, are worthy to take their place by the side of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in that world whose inhabitants owe their being to the creative imagination.

A Chronological List of His Writings. — Excluding some of the less important, his writings appeared in the following order:

Sketches by Boz 1836-37
Pickwick Papers 1837
Oliver Twist 1837
Nicholas Nickleby 1838
Master Humphrey's Clock (Old Curiosity Shop and *Barnaby Rudge)* 1840-41
American Notes 1842
Christmas Carol 1843
Martin Chuzzlewit 1844
The Chimes 1844

ie Cricket on the Hearth..... 1846
mbey and Son..... 1848
vid Copperfield..... 1850
ild's History of England.....1852-54
eak House..... 1853
ard Times..... 1854
ttle Dorrit..... 1857
le of Two Cities..... 1859
reat Expectations..... 1861
ncommercial Traveller..... 1861
ystery of Edwin Drood..... 1870

From this list it is seen that at first Dickens produced a novel ch year. His early productivity, when one considers his other tivities, was remarkable. Nor did the quality of his work ffer because of the rapidity with which it was done. When worked he worked intensely. His abounding vitality, that uberance of spirits permeating his literary work, was characteristic of the physical Dickens.

First Novels.— While *Pickwick* was appearing he was busily gaged in writing his first long story, the *Adventures of Oliver wist*, a tale designed to picture "the dregs of life." The modern alist feels that Dickens shrank from the execution of his purse; that in *Oliver Twist* there is too much of romance and elodrama, that his criminals and outcasts do not speak the nguage of the pariahs of society. It is pointed out that the aculation of Bill Sikes, as he flees from his pursuers — "Wolves ar your throats!" — is a strange curse for a London burglar. ut these shortcomings are apparent more to the professional itic and devotee to modern realism than to the general reader, r its broad sympathy, genial gleams of humor lighting up the enes of squalor, and the dramatic intensity of the action, still ercise their charm over the lovers of fiction.

Before *Oliver Twist* had reached its conclusion in the riodical in which it was appearing, *Nicholas Nickleby* had gun to run its course of twenty numbers. The comic spirit

prevailed in *Pickwick,* the tragic in *Oliver Twist;* in *Nicho Nickleby* we find an advancement in the art of the novelist, f here we find a fusion of the comic and tragic. The story, long than *Oliver Twist,* reveals more baldly the author's weakness plot-construction. His strength lay in the incidents, situatio characters. As to the characters Mr. Marzials writes:

"What lavish profusion of humor in the theatrical group that clust round Mr. Vincent Crummles, the country manager; and in the Sque family too; and in the little shop-world of Mrs. Mantalini, the fashiona dressmaker; and in the Cheerible brothers, the golden-hearted old m chants who take Nicholas into their counting-house. Then for sin characters commend me to Mrs. Nickleby, whose logic, which some cyn would call feminine, is positively sublime in its want of coherence; a to John Browdie, the honest Yorkshire corn-factor, as good a fell almost as Dandie Dinmont, the Border yeoman whom Scott ma immortal."

As *Oliver Twist* by its graphic portrayal of the vices of t underworld stimulated social reform, so *Nicholas Nickle* through its description of Dotheboys Hall with its cruelty a unpedagogical methods helped to bring about educational refor The immediate effect was to ruin the school which Dickens h taken as his model. In later years the usher who had served the original of Nicholas Nickleby wrote, in a letter asking f assistance, that he

"had formerly been living with Mr. Shawe at Bowes, and they had be happy and prosperous, when Mr. Dickens's misguided volume, sweepi like a whirlwind over the schools of the North, caused Mr. Shawe become a victim to paralysis, and brought Mrs. Shawe to an untim grave."

Master Humphrey's Clock was a periodical started by Dicke It was to serve as a vehicle for essays, sketches, and stori Dickens was to receive £50 for each number. The public, anti pating something like *Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickle* ordered in advance 70,000 copies, but, disappointed in what w found, lost interest and the sales rapidly decreased. Alwa quick to respond to the public feeling, Dickens soon abandon

the original plan and wrote the *Old Curiosity Shop,* an idyllic romance whose heroine is Little Nell, a favorite with Landor, the poet, and with Lord Jeffrey, the critic, as well as with thousands of less distinction. There are those, however, who considering Little Nell too much of an abstraction, a heroine lacking in distinct individuality, admire far more the creative skill that produced the engaging and realistic Dick Swiveller. Mr. Howells, although conceding that there are lapses in taste and truth, thinks there is in this work "a sense of the divinity in common and humble lives, which is the most precious quality of literature, as it is almost the rarest, and it is this which moves and consoles." *Barnaby Rudge* also appeared in *Master Humphrey's Clock.* It is a historical novel dealing with the No Popery Riots of 1780. There are those who think it impossible for any one to write a good historical novel; whether that opinion be right or wrong, it is certain that Dickens is at his best in describing contemporary life. And yet so clever a critic as Mr. Howells places *Baranby Rudge* higher than any book Dickens had yet written. Most of us, however, agree with the early criticism of Edgar Allan Poe, who thought Dickens had not done so well as his high reputation demanded. In spite of brilliant descriptions of lurid scenes, a plot better than many of his novels, and a great portrait of the erratic Lord George Gordon, *Barnaby Rudge* remains a second-rate novel.

First American Trip. — On January 28, 1842, Dickens accompanied by his wife landed in Boston for a four months' trip through the United States. During their stay they visited the principal cities as far west as St. Louis and Chicago. Always an eager and capable observer of customs and manners, Dickens was intensely interested in the new country, and at first wrote enthusiastically of what he saw, but before many weeks he wrote to his friend Macready:

"It is of no use, I am disappointed. This is not the republic I came to see; this is not the republic of my imagination. I infinitely prefer a liberal monarchy — even with its sickening accompaniment of Court circulars — to such a government as this. The more I think of its youth and

strength, the poorer and more trifling in a thousand aspects it appears in my eyes. In everything of which it has made a boast, excepting its education of the people, and its care for poor children, it sinks immeasurably below the level I had placed it upon, and England, bad and faulty as the old land is, and miserable as millions of her people are, rises in the comparison. . . . Freedom of opinion; where is it?"

This extract expresses the spirit of the *American Notes* and *Martin Chuzzlewit,* the fruits of his first visit to America. As he had been greeted like an emperor and feasted as the "guest of the nation," why was he so bitter in his criticism? Two reasons may be given: in the first place, Dickens had in mind an ideal republic, and the contrast between what he expected and what he saw was disappointing; in the second place, Dickens, with all his keenness, was not a profound thinker and philosopher. The crudities, the inconveniences, the lack of refinement, and the rawness of the great republic were apparent to one who rushed from city to city during a four months' trip, but the wholesome idealism of the vigorous democracy was not so apparent. He resented the injustice of the copyright laws and the existence of slavery in a republic, but he did not appreciate the existence of the silent millions who hated injustice and slavery with an ardor equal to his own. The *American Notes* is not a great book of travel; with Macaulay we may call it "frivolous and dull," and compared with De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* and Bryce's *The American Commonwealth* the *American Notes* is shallow.

Before leaving this topic, in fairness to Dickens it must be added that after his hearty reception on the occasion of his second visit, he generously confessed, while noting changes in the nation:

"Nor am I, believe me, so arrogant to suppose that in five and twenty years there have been no changes in me, and that I had nothing to learn, and no extreme impressions to correct when I was here first."

A new nation is sensitive to foreign criticism, and that the American people were offended by the *American Notes* was natural enough. The publication of *Martin Chuzzlewit,* with its American setting, more fully revealed the animus of Dickens,

hose inconsistency led him to despise the American nation for toleration of slavery and yet sympathize with the South during great conflict with the North. But *Martin Chuzzlewit* is ore than a satire on American self-satisfaction and intolerance; is a fine exposition of the evils of selfishness. The principal aracters have an individuality that place them among the mortals of his creation: Pecksniff, Mark Tapley, Tom Pinch, d, above all, Mrs. Gamp are masterpieces of characteriza-on.

David Copperfield.—Passing by the Christmas stories such the *Christmas Carol, The Chimes, The Cricket on the Hearth, he Battle of Life, The Haunted Man,* and the *Ghost's Bargain,* ort stories prepared at the Christmas season, and without dis-ssing *Dombey and Son,* a story portraying the vice and folly of ide, we come to what may be considered the culmination of his t, his masterpiece, *David Copperfield.* Dickens himself was nd of this novel:

"Of all my books, I like this the best. It will be easily believed that m a fond parent to every child of my fancy, and that no one can ever e that family as dearly as I love them. But like many fond parents, I ve in my heart of hearts a favorite child—and his name is *David pperfield.*"

Every man has in his own life the material for one novel at st; in Dickens, through his power of observation, his imagina-n and art, there were many, but in no other do we have such intimate revelation of his own life and personality as in *David pperfield,* for David is Dickens himself. It is too much to y that the autobiographical revelation is the quality that has de this novel a general favorite, for the book was a favorite g before the public knew that David and Dickens were one. *vid Copperfield* is a work of art, unequal and irregular, but ssessing more coherence in the plot, less melodrama and strain-after effect, than many of his compositions. Here we ve genuine humor and simple pathos, and the characters, ious and distinct, have the verisimilitude of life. Mr. Swin-rne thinks that in this novel the comic and the tragic genius of

Dickens "rose now and then to the very highest pitch of all The characters are unforgettable — thousands who have nev read a line of Dickens have heard of the optimistic Micawbe that "type of genial impecuniosity" who is forever waiting f something to turn up. Uriah Heep still remains the type fawning, obsequious hypocrisy. The artificiality of Rose Dart and Steerforth is offset by the life-likeness of Miss Betsy Tro wood, that "fine old gnarled piece of womanhood," the boatma Peggotty, and Mr. Dick, while the idyllic love story of Dora ar David, and the sweet character of Agnes, infuse a strain idealism very acceptable to the English reader.

Later Novels.—Bleak House, introducing the Chancery su of Jarndyce and Jarndyce, is a study of the influence of a Cha cery suit upon its unfortunate victims, and aims to bring abo reforms of those legal abuses which cause the law's delay. Harold Skimpole, the epicurean, we have an alleged portrait Leigh Hunt, a portrayal resented by the author of *Abou Be Adhem,* and in the vehement Boythorn there is seen a resem blance to Landor. *Hard Times,* dedicated to Carlyle, was co cluded in *Household Words* for August 12, 1854. It deals wi economic and political conditions. "Sullen socialism" Macaulay's characterization of the teachings of the book, whi Ruskin thought it "entirely right in main drift and purpose and that the book should be studied carefully by persons inte ested in social questions. Dickens is right in insisting that th world is not to be governed by the application of hard and fa economic laws, but he lacked the philosophic grasp of econom conditions to enable him to solve one of the greatest problem of wages. *Little Dorrit* was finished in his new home of Gad Hill Place, purchased in March, 1856. This novel, exhibiting th author's power as an analyst of human character, and bearin marks of a diminution of inventive skill, is a satire on officialis The *Edinburgh Review* rebuked him for his ridicule of the "insti tutions of the country, the laws, the administration, in a wor the government under which we live." *The Tale of Two Citi* deals with London and Paris in 1793, the awful year of th

French Revolution. It is a story of passion, misery, heroism, love, and happiness, with dramatic episodes and pathetic incidents. It is unlike his other novels in its lack of humor to relieve the intensity of feeling and action. "In dignity and eloquence," thinks Mr. Chesterton, "it almost stands alone among the books by Dickens." In *Great Expectations,* the story told by Pip, we again have the old Dickens both in picturesqueness and in humor. Joe Gargery, the blacksmith, ranks with Peggotty in *David Copperfield* as a masterpiece of creation. *Our Mutual Friend,* the last novel fully completed by Dickens, was written under adverse circumstances which in spite of fine realistic descriptions of river-side life and some of his old time humor and satire cause the work to fall below his earlier compositions. This novel was published in 1865. Four years later Dickens was busily engaged in writing a new novel, the very title of which shows how far Dickens had traveled since the days of *Pickwick,* for *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* suggests a story in which the plot should play a large part. But before the mystery was solved the author himself had entered the great Mystery.

Public Readings. — In taking a rapid survey of his novels we have passed by important biographical details. One of the most important incidents is his second trip to the United States for the purpose of giving public readings, the trip lasting from the 9th of November, 1867, to the beginning of the following May. Since 1853 Dickens had been giving public readings from his writings in England, Scotland, and Ireland. He had histrionic ability and was an excellent reader. It is said that had he not been a great author he would have been a great actor. "His readings," according to Mr. Kent, "were, in the fullest meaning of the words, singularly ingenious and highly elaborated histrionic performances." He liked to meet his admiring public face to face, and spared no pains to give them the very best dramatic interpretation of the most intense episodes in his fiction. Even had he been a poor reader his popularity was such that he would have had immense audiences wherever he went. In America his

audiences, forgetting all that Dickens had said against the American people, gathered in such numbers that he returned home richer by $100,000, but somewhat broken down in health. It is estimated that by his readings both at home and abroad he made $225,000. Upon his return to England he continued to give these public readings. During 1869 he read frequently from *Oliver Twist,* selecting passages culminating in the murder of Nancy. So thoroughly did he enter into the spirit of this dramatic episode that the excitement attending the emotional interpretation undoubtedly shortened his life.

The End.—He died on June 9, 1870, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, while the English-speaking world mourned the loss of its most popular novelist.

"So there he lies among his peers in the Southern Transept [writes Mr. Marzials]. Close beside him sleep Dr. Johnson, the puissant literary autocrat of his own time; and Garrick, who was that time's greatest actor; and Handel, who may fittingly claim to have been one of the mightiest musicians of all time. There sleeps, too, after the fitful fever of his troubled life, the witty, the eloquent Sheridan. In close proximity rests Macaulay, the artist-historian and essayist. Within the radius of a few miles lies all that will ever die of Chaucer, who five hundred years ago sounded the spring note of English literature, and gave to all after-time the best, brightest glimpse into mediaeval England; and all that is mortal of Spenser of the honey'd verse; and of Beaumont, who had caught an echo of Shakspere's sweetness if not his power; and of sturdy Ben Jonson, held in his own day a not unworthy rival of Shakspere's self; and of 'glorious' and most masculine John Dryden. From his monument Shakspere looks upon the place with his kindly eyes, and Addison too, and Goldsmith; and one can almost imagine a smile of fellowship upon the marble faces of those later dead—Burns, Coleridge, Southey, and Thackeray."

Personal Characteristics.—Carlyle's description of the youthful Boz has already been quoted. In addition it may be added that later in life he had a brown moustache, a bushy brown beard, a complexion which Mrs. Carlyle thought metallic and like to clear steel; his eyes were active, darting hither and thither "like brilliant birds to pick up all the tiny things of which he made more, perhaps, than any other novelist has done"; the

mouth was large. A French painter remarked that "he was more like one of the old Dutch admirals we see in the picture galleries than a man of letters." In dress he was somewhat of a dandy, enjoying velvet coats, waistcoats that have been likened to incredible sunsets, and expansive white hats. He liked to be noticed, and that is why he took much pleasure in his public readings. The relish with which he describes the many convivial scenes in his books might lead one to the opinion that he himself was somewhat of a gourmet; but he was abstemious rather than epicurean.

The same exuberant vitality that fills the pages of his novels filled his life. He was sensitive, active, restless. Though fond of home and knowing that he needed the inspiration of the familiar London streets to do his best work, he rushed, in addition to his American trips, again and again, to Paris, Switzerland, and Italy. At home or abroad, both in his youth and maturity, he was an unwearied walker. He thought nothing of a walk of twenty or thirty miles, a practice resulting in his wonderful intimacy with the street life of London. He liked especially to roam about at night. "Put me down on Waterloo Bridge," he writes from Genoa to Forster, "at eight o'clock in the evening with leave to roam about as long as I like, and I would come home, as you know, panting to go on."

His Humanity. — He is a satirist, a humorist, and a caricaturist, and as such makes us laugh as he holds up to our view the foibles of our fellowmen. But he is much more than these — he is a lover of mankind. He is far removed from that pessimist who the more he saw of man, the more highly he thought of dogs. With a childhood that had experienced the bitterness of poverty, with first-hand information concerning the vice and degradation of the scum of the streets, Dickens maintains an optimism that puzzles the academic critic whose pessimism is the outcome of over-development of the intellect with under-development of the body. Although he may be lacking in a broad, comprehensive view of society, he is almost invariably on the side of righteousness and justice. Washington Irving once wrote to Dickens of

"that exquisite tact that enabled him to carry his reader through the veriest dens of vice and villainy without a breath to shock the ear or a stain to sully the robe of the most shrinking delicacy. . . . It is a rare gift to be able to paint low life without being low, and to be comic without the least taint of vulgarity."

Dickens could do this because his sympathy with the humblest and lowest types of humanity enabled him to see the good in everything, and his sensitive soul perceived, what many modern realists fail to see, that goodness is as *real* as vice.

Although an admirer of the Established Church, he was not ecclesiastical in religion. He was charged with attacking religion when he was merely ridiculing cant and hypocrisy. An admirer of the teachings of the New Testament, he paraphrased parts of it for the use of his children. The following extract from a letter of September, 1868, to his youngest son, who was going to Australia, shows the fine Christian sentiment of the author:

"Never take a mean advantage of any one in any transaction, and never be hard upon people who are in your power. Try to do to others as you would have them do to you, and do not be discouraged if they fail sometimes. It is much better for you that they should fail in obeying the greatest rule laid down by our Saviour than that you should. I put a *New Testament* among your books for the very same reasons, and with the very same hopes, that made me write an easy account of it for you, when you were a little child. Because it is the best book that ever was, or will be, known in the world; and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature, who tries to be truthful and faithful to duty, can possibly be guided. . . . You will remember that you have never at home been harassed about religious observances, or mere formalities. I have always been anxious not to weary my children with such things before they are old enough to form opinions respecting them. You will therefore understand the better that I now most solemnly impress upon you the truth and beauty of the Christian Religion, as it came from Christ Himself, and the impossibility of your going far wrong if you humbly but heartily respect it. . . . Never abandon the wholesome practice of saying your own private prayers, night and morning. I have never abandoned it myself, and I know the comfort of it."

Rank as Writer.—The chief faults that have been charged against Dickens are that he exaggerates and that he is lacking in

yle. It is undoubtedly true that many of his characters are ricatures rather than lifelike portraits; and that much of his ork lacked distinction; that it was even bad, might be expected om his method of composition. But moderation and style are ot the be-all and end-all of art; Shakspere himself is at times mbastic, and Walter Pater is a stylist of moderation, but Pater not greater than Shakspere.

A sensibility that gave him a keen sense of humor, a deep alization of the pathos of life, imagination, a strong instinct or the dramatic, an eye for detail, a heart that loved his fellow-an — these are the qualities that furnished the equipment of e most popular writer of his time. In his own day the profes-onal critic would have hesitated to assert whether Dickens, ulwer-Lytton, Thackeray, Charlotte Brontë, or George Eliot ould bear the palm of fame. Today, more than a century after e birth of Dickens, Thackeray alone disputes his supremacy, ot as to popularity, but as to literary ability. Dickens has ways been the more popular because he appeals both to educated nd uneducated. To decide which of the two is the greater is a itile task. Each will be read as long as the English-speaking eople shall find profit and pleasure in the art of the story-teller, nd that will be as long as the English language survives.

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CHAPTER XVI

Thackeray

THACKERAY belongs to the select group of the greatest writers of English fiction.

"I cannot help telling the truth as I view it, and describing what I see. To describe it otherwise than it seems to me would be falsehood to that calling in which it has pleased Heaven to place me, treason to that conscience which says that men are weak, that truth must be told, that fault must be owned, that pardon must be prayed for, and that love reigns supreme over all."

Such is the serious attitude, such the philosophy of this interesting personality, this great-hearted, gifted writer whose theory of fiction places him among the realists, but whose practice is shot through and through with an idealism, a tenderness that precludes our classifying him with the strict disciples of realism. With malice toward none and with charity for all he held the mirror up to life as he saw it; that his mirror did not reflect a world of enchanting beauty and goodness must not be attributed to cynicism but to sincerity. While it is true that in his novels we hear the repetition of the depressing refrain of *Vanitas vanitatum,* it is equally true that above the still sad music of humanity we hear the insistent note "that love reigns supreme over all."

Birth and Boyhood.—William Makepeace Thackeray was born at Calcutta on July 18, 1811. Both father and grandfather had been employed in the Indian civil service. Shortly after the birth of William, the father was promoted to be Collector of the Calcutta Districts, the highest office in the gift of the Governor. When the son was four years old and the mother but twenty-three, the father died. In 1817 the young son was sent to England to be educated.

"I came from India as a child [writes Thackeray himself], and our ship touched at an island on the way home, where my black servant took me a long way over rocks and hills until we reached a garden, where we saw a man walking. 'That is he,' said the black man, 'that is Bonaparte! He eats three sheep every day, and all the little children he can lay hands on!'"

He attended private schools; first in Hampshire and later at Chiswick. It was while at Chiswick that his mother and stepfather, for Mrs. Thackeray had married again, her husband being Major Carmichael Smyth, came to England. "He had a perfect memory of me," in later years said Mrs. Smyth concerning the reunion, "he could not speak, but kissed me, and looked at me again and again." Young Thackeray and his stepfather soon became good friends, for Major Carmichael had the qualities that would endear him to any boy, his acquaintances in later years insisting that he was the original of Colonel Newcome, that "finest of all English gentlemen." The mother herself is described by Trollope as "a handsome, spare, grey-haired lady, whom Thackeray treated with a courtly deference as well as constant affection."

At the Charterhouse.—When eleven years old he was sent to the Charterhouse School, then located near Smithfield. He remained there as a student until May, 1828. Many years before Addison and Steele had attended this school, and it is here that the novelist has placed many of his characters. Young Rawdon Crawley, Pendennis, Colonel Newcome and his son, and Philip Firmin are among those who attended the Charterhouse. Some of his biographers quote from one of his letters to prove that he was unhappy at the Charterhouse:

"I really think I am becoming terribly industrious, though I can't get Dr. Russell to think so. It is so hard, when you endeavor to work hard, to find your attempts nipped in the bud. . . . There are but 370 in the school. I wish there were only 369."

But though timid and sensitive, he was of too healthy a nature not to extract some enjoyment from his school life.

Some of his schoolmates have recorded their impressions of hackeray as a Charterhouse boy. Mr. J. F. Boyes writes:

"In the two or three years I am recording I scarcely ever saw hackeray seriously angry, or even his brow wrinkled with a frown. He s been called a cynic: it is doubtful if a real cynic could ever be manu-ctured out of a boy who had such powers as he had of sarcasm, and io used them so little unkindly. . . . He had no school industry. Not e in those early days could have believed that there was much work in n, or that he would ever rise to the top of any tree by climbing. . . . is beau-ideal was the serious and sublime; he was too familiar with, too uch a master of the humorous to think as much of that mastery as his mirers did. I have heard him speak in terms of homage to the genius Keats that he would not have vouchsafed to the whole tribe of humor-s. A rosy-faced boy, with dark curling hair and a quick intelligent eye, er twinkling with *good*-humor. He was stout and broad-set, and gave promise of the stature which he afterwards reached. . . . For the usual hoolboy sports and games Thackeray had no taste or passion whatever, y more than in after-life for those field sports which seem to have been e delight of his fellow-humorist and school-fellow, Leech. . . . For a n-playing boy he was wonderfully social, full of vivacity and enjoyment life; his happy insouciance was constant. Never was a lad at once so vial, so healthy, and so sedentary."

At the University.—In February, 1829, he entered Trinity llege, Cambridge, where he remained for two years, leaving, e Byron, Wordsworth, and Tennyson, without taking his gree. From a letter of March, 1830, we gather that he was oached" three times a week from eight to nine by Fawcett; at from nine to ten he attended Fisher's lectures on mathe-atics; from ten to eleven he listened to Starr, the lecturer on e classics. With Badger, a freshman, he read Greek plays om eleven to twelve, and then from twelve to one studied uclid and algebra. His evenings were given to one or the other these subjects, or to collateral reading on Thucydides or schylus. "This is my plan which I trust to be able to keep." good plan and a worthy intention! But one wonders whether hackeray, who in later years confessed his chief faults to be ndolence and luxury" kept to such a full program. We do ow that a strict adherence to this program did not hinder him

from the full enjoyment of the varied social life of the Un versity — that he fenced, played chess, and, what is more to th purpose, did a vast amount of desultory reading in poetry, fictio and history. He even spoke at the Union, the famous Cambridg debating club, on the character of Napoleon, but he felt h attempt was a failure.

His university career was not brilliant, neither was it a failur As Walter Bagehot has said the value of an English universi education consists more in the friendships there formed than the actual information through formal studies. While at Cam bridge he formed friendships with men like Edward Fitzgeral Monckton Milnes, W. H. Thompson, R. C. French, John Sterlin Alfred Tennyson, James Spedding, John Alten, and Willia Brookfield. To have made the intimate acquaintance of suc men indicates a well-spent college life, and corroborates Mr. Me ivale in his belief that

"All that our poor Pen [Pendennis] then was, Thackeray in his honorab course at that critical time was not. Neither selfish nor conceited, n noisy and dissipated at college, ungrateful and loveless at home — but fu of home-thoughts and loving-kindness, tender, modest, and manly, wel graced and pure."

Getting Under Way. — Shortly after leaving Cambridge h took the customary trip to the Continent, residing for som months at Weimar, the literary center made famous by Schill and Goethe. Schiller was no more, but Goethe at the ripe ol age of eighty-one added luster to Weimer. He received youn Thackeray "in rather a more *distingue* manner than he has use the other young Englishmen here." In the *Life of Goethe* b G. H. Lewes there is a long letter of Thackeray's giving h impressions of Goethe and the Weimar circle. The literar atmosphere of the courtly Weimar circle must have been charm ing to the sensitive youth, and it is not unlikely that what h there saw and felt had its influence when in after years he chos literature as his profession.

In the fall of 1831 we find him again in London, entere as a law student at the Middle Temple. Though he regarde

profession as an honorable calling, he was not enamored of nor is it likely that he studied more diligently than did Pennis. When on July 18, 1832, he became of age, he renounced law and all its rigors, and hurried to Paris to study French d drawing, and to go into society and attend the theaters.

In January, 1833, Major Carmichael became associated with *e National Standard,* a venture in journalism. With the pearance of the nineteenth number Thackeray became its itor, and a few weeks later he purchased the paper. After an istence of thirteen months the paper died. With its failure nt a part of the fortune which Thackeray had inherited on ming of age. How he lost the remainder, which has been timated to have been sufficient to produce an income of from oo to £500 a year, has been a matter of speculation. He doubtedly lost some at play, more was lost in his first journlistic venture, some in an Indian bank failure, and much ned to needy but forgetful friends, for this reputed cynic was most generous friend.

Always fond of drawing and hoping that his genius lay in at direction, he now took up the serious study of art. In Paris he rked diligently, and, when not engaged in copying pictures in e Louvre, managed to have a gay time with his fellow students o were living the free Bohemian life. He never distinguished nself as an artist, though like Clive in *The Newcomes* he had me talent in caricature. He enlivened much of his later literary rk with his sketches, which, while deficient in draughtsmanip, portrayed his meaning more completely than might have en done by one with more technique and less sympathy and derstanding. He also frequently delighted his friends by corating the margin of his letters with humorous sketches.

His studies in Paris failed to make him an artist, but his life that cosmopolitan center, like his childhood days in India, his hooldays at the Charterhouse, his Cambridge residence, his te of German life, contributed to that variety and richness of formation so indispensable to the novelist who would portray e not as he pictures it from the seclusion of a cloistered library

but as he has experienced it. From his private letters, from h later articles in the *Constitutional,* and from the *Paris Sketc Book,* we find that Thackeray was interested in the politica social, and literary life and customs of France, and that lik Pendennis he would not have hesitated, at twenty-four hour notice, "to pass an opinion upon the greatest scholars, or give judgment upon the encyclopaedia."

Marriage.—In 1836 Thackeray and his stepfather took leading part in establishing a newspaper, *The Constitutional an Public Ledger.* Major Smyth became chairman of the stoc company and Thackeray was appointed the Paris correspondent Both invested heavily and lost heavily when the paper faile Thackeray losing the last of his patrimony.

In the meantime, trusting to his salary as correspondent t the *Constitutional,* Thackeray had married Isabella Shawe, a Irish young lady whom he had met first at his grandmother' The date of the marriage, often given erroneously, has bee determined by a record in the house of the British Ambassado at Paris. It is August 20, 1836. His friends may have thoug it imprudent for Thackeray to marry when his income was unce tain, but Thackeray would never admit that he had been reckles Twenty years after his marriage he wrote to Mr. Synge:

> "I married at your age with £400 paid by a newspaper which fail six months afterwards, and always love to hear of a young fellow testi his fortune bravely in that way; . . . though my marriage was a wreck, you know, I would do it again, for behold, Love is the crown a completion of all earthly good."

At first the young couple lived in Paris, but after the failu of the newspaper they returned to England, living in London Great Coram street, Thackeray supporting his family by h literary talents. Three daughters were born: Anne Isabell who later became an author of some note; the second died infancy; and Harriet Marion, who later married the distinguish critic, Sir Leslie Stephen. It was soon after the birth of t third child that the health of Mrs. Thackeray failed, her mi giving way. She was placed under proper care; the two ch

dren went to live with Thackeray's mother, and thus Thackeray's happy married life came to an end before he was thirty.

"People afterwards called him cynical [writes Mr. Marzials] because he saw so clearly the evil in things good as well as the good in things evil. But the wonder rather is that he did not come out of such an ordeal soured, dispirited, disenchanted with life itself — doubting if it be indeed worth living — and preaching to others revolt and despair. This effect his trial never had. It left him with a heart saddened indeed, but full of courage, and full especially of a great tenderness for all human sorrow and suffering."

Miscellaneous Writings. — Before Thackeray became widely known as a novelist he had served a long apprenticeship as correspondent, journalist, editor, essayist, and even poet, though his poetry, good as it is, never has ranked with his prose. In 1838 the *Yellowplush Papers,* full of frolic and satire, appeared in *Fraser's;* this was followed by *Catharine,* the disagreeable story of a criminal. The story was written as a satire on what Thackeray called the Newgate novels. Disgusted with the false romanticism with which novelists were investing the careers of criminals, Thackeray wrote *Catharine* to show the public the vulgarity and loathsomeness of the real criminal. When one of his critics described *Catharine* as "one of the dullest, most vulgar, and immoral works extant," Thackeray felt that he had succeeded, even though this critic had failed to see the purpose of the satire. The *Paris Sketch-Book* (1840), *Fitz-Boodle's Confessions and Professions, The Irish Sketch-Book* (1843), *From Cornhill to Grand Cairo* (1844), a record of a trip to the orient, are some of his productions. In the last named work is one of his best poems, *The White Squall,* ending with the tender lines,

"And when its force espended,
The harmless storm was ended,
And as the sunrise splendid
Came blushing o'er the sea,
I thought as day was breaking,
My little girls were waking
And smiling, and making
A prayer at home for me."

In addition, there had appeared in *Fraser's* in 1841 *The History of Mr. Samuel Titmarsh,* and *The Great Hogarty Diamond.* In the last named we now see the promise of *Vanity Fair* and *Henry Esmond,* although then it evoked no enthusiasm from the reading public, even if the more discerning few did praise it. John Sterling wrote:

"I got hold of the first two numbers of *The Hogarty Diamond,* and read them with great delight. What is there better in Fielding or Goldsmith? The man is a true genius. . . . There is more truth in nature in one of those papers than in all Dickens' novels put together."

In 1848 came the *Book of Snobs,* a masterpiece of satiric humor, full of caricature and exaggeration, but keenly portraying the English foible, "an unreasonable deference for artificial superiorities."

Soon after the founding of *Punch* Thackeray became a contributor, and for ten years he contributed a great variety of sketches, love-letters, criticisms, burlesques, poems, parodies, and caricatures. His *Punch's Prize Novelists* contained parodies of Bulwer, Lever, and Disraeli. His parody of *Ivanhoe, Rebecca and Rowena* is one of the best burlesques ever written.

Barry Lyndon.—This novel, appearing in *Fraser's* in 1844, under the cumbersome title of *The Luck of Barry Lyndon, a Romance of the Last Century,* has for its hero an "intolerable scoundrel, who is magnificently unconscious of his own iniquity." W. D. Howells thinks that *Barry Lyndon* is "the most perfect creation of Thackeray's mind."

In taking a scoundrel for a hero Thackeray is following the example of a novelist whom he greatly admired. In his *Jonathan Wild* Fielding takes for his hero, as Thackeray himself has told us in one of his lectures on the *Humorists,*

"the greatest rascal, coward, traitor, tyrant, hypocrite, that his wit and experience, both large in this matter, could enable him to devise or depict; he accompanies this villain through all the transactions of his life, with a grinning deference and a wonderful mock respect, and doesn't leave him till he is dangling at the gallows, when the satirist makes him a low bow and wishes the scoundrel good-day."

hackeray's scoundrel dies of *delirium tremens* after a residence more than eighteen years in Fleet Prison. Though Thackay's story may be highly artistic in the literary sense, its bject matter is so disagreeable that the novel is not widely ad.

Vanity Fair.—In January, 1847, Bradbury and Evans ought out the first of the twenty-four numbers of *Vanity Fair,* e very title of which, like *The Scarlet Letter,* is a stroke of enius; the last number appeared in 1848. When the first numr appeared Thackeray was known as a clever journalist; when e novel was finished the discerning knew that a novelist had ppeared who would rank with the greatest masters of English ction. While the novel was appearing Mrs. Carlyle wrote to r husband, "I brought away the last four numbers of *Vanity air,* and read one of them during the night. Very good indeed, eats Dickens out of the world." And over in America Edwin Whipple in 1848 called it "a fresh and vigorous transcript of nglish life."

In *Vanity Fair,* as in *Barry Lyndon,* we have traces of the rong influence of Fielding. Just as Fielding, in writing *Tom ones,* revolted against the sentimentalism of Richardson, so hackeray, in writing *Vanity Fair,* "a novel without a hero," rotested against that romanticism which places its heroes and eroines upon an inaccessible pinnacle of goodness, and suberges its villains in an infamous sea of vice. If the book has heroine it is the wonderful Becky Sharp, whom we follow with terest from the time she leaves the boarding school for girls the end of her disreputable career. She is attractive, shrewd, pable, and selfish. She lies, though not to slander others; her is arise from her ignoble ambition to be a leading member of at fashionable world where snobbery rules. She is faithless her husband and without affection for her child.

"But she is so shrewd [writes Mr. Rideing], so vivacious, so artful, immensely clever and good humored, she has so much prettiness of nner and person, that, while we despise her, and have not the least pity r her when retribution falls heavily upon her, our indignation against

her is not so great as we feel that it ought to be, principally because h sins have a certain feminine archness and irresponsibility in them whi keeps them well down to the level of comedy."

Rawdon Crawley, the hulking, dissipated, stupid husband, ha the questionable virtue of being wholly devoted to his intriguin wife. But like Macbeth he is no coward. The scene in whic Rawdon, after an insult by Lord Steyne, seizes the gilded nobl man by the neck-cloth, until Steyne, almost strangled, writhe and bent under his avenging arm, is one of the great scenes i English fiction.

"'You lie, you dog,' said Rawdon; 'you lie, you coward and villain And he struck the peer twice over the face with his open hand, and flun him bleeding to the ground. It was all done before Rebecca could inte pose. She stood there trembling before him. She admired her husban strong, brave, and victorious."

To have Rebecca admire her husband in this crisis of h deceptive life is a touch of genius.

Amelia Sedley, with the commonplace virtues of an Englis middle-class girl, is the contrast to the brilliant Becky. Tha she is uninteresting, perhaps insipid, may be because the com monplace virtues in a commonplace character have less of th spectacular than the uncommon cleverness of a heartless scheme True to her friends, loyal to her husband, devoted to her chil she is everything that Becky is not; and while the Amelias o fiction may lack charm, we feel that in real life they are the sa that keeps society sweet and wholesome. Thackeray in portra ing Amelia may wish to show, as Chesterton suggests, that th gentleness and sincerity of even a fool will go farther and w more of real happiness than the duplicity of a knave. Osborn Amelia's husband, is a poor creature, unworthy of her love, b very human in his weakness and not without some claim upo our respect.

The short paragraph ending the thirty-third chapter an recording Osborne's death at Waterloo is one of the finest pa sages penned by Thackeray:

"No more firing was heard at Brussels — the pursuit rolled miles way. Darkness came down on the field and city: and Amelia was praying or George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his eart."

Of George, too, it might be said that nothing in his life became im like the leaving it.

Constant in manly devotion and patient unselfishness, Dobbin, he friend of George and the faithful lover of Amelia, might tand as the hero of this novel without a hero. But though nusually good, he is uninteresting. He marries Amelia after er widowhood of fifteen years. "The vessel is in port. He has ot the prize he has been trying for all his life. . . . This is what e has asked for every day and hour for eighteen years."

Pendennis. — In November, 1848, four months after the pub- ication of the last number of *Vanity Fair,* the first number of *The History of Pendennis* appeared. After the eleventh number f September, 1849, Thackeray became very ill, his life being espaired of for a time, but four months later *Pendennis* again ppeared and moved without interruption to its conclusion.

In the preface Thackeray avows his purpose to follow the xample of Fielding. "Since the author of *Tom Jones* was uried, no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to epict to his utmost power a MAN." Fathers and mothers shall ow hear what is going on in college and club, in the real world where sons act and talk like real persons. Has Thackeray suc- eeded? Not altogether; he admits that he has passed over ome of the episodes in the career of his hero; the conventionali- ies of his more refined age did not permit that frankness indulged n by Fielding.

In a semi-autobiographic way Pendennis is Thackeray him- elf, and Thackeray, like Dickens in the case of *David Copper- ield,* had a great fondness for this child of his fancy. Concern- ng Pendennis he wrote to Mrs. Brookfield, while he was com- osing the book:

"He is a very good-natured, generous young fellow, and I begin to ke him considerably. I wonder whether he is interesting for selfish

reasons, and because I fancy we resemble each other in many points, ar whether I can get the public to like him too."

Pendennis is far removed from the faultless hero of ordinar fiction. In his youthful days he deceives his mother, gamble is "plucked" at the university, and falls desperately in love wit an actress whom it would be folly to marry. And yet he ha qualities which make him likable. In the end Thackeray reward this inconstant, wayward, oft-penitent youth with the hand o Laura. Mr. Trollope points out that this is almost the onl instance in all Thackeray's works in which this blissful state i reached.

"Pen, who surely deserved a Nemesis, though perhaps not one s black as that demanded by George Osborne's delinquencies, is treated a though he had passed through the fire and had come out — if not pur gold, still gold good enough for goldsmiths."

Besides Pendennis and Laura there is a world of real charac ters sharply individualized. George Warrington, sensible, sturdy and straightforward, though not faultless, is a good contrast t his friend Pendennis; Major Pendennis, worldly and snobbish is not without skill and courage, as witness his encounter wit Captain Costigan.

"Then here's Costigan, with his sodden face and slouching drunkard manners; and his daughter, the handsome Fotheringay; and little Bow the fiddler, her teacher in the actor's art; and Altamont, the scoundre and Sir Francis Clavering, the no less a scoundrel, and of a more sneakin kind; and Captain Strong, the citizen of the world; and Mirobolant, th French artist in cookery; and poor little flirting Fanny Bolton; and Foke the rich brewer's son, with a core of real stuff and sound sense in his oth ramshackle character; and, and — how many more, not forgetting Mi Blanche Amory, the Becky Sharp of *Pendennis*."

Henry Esmond and *The Virginians*. — *Henry Esmond*, appea ing in 1852, has the reputation of being the best historic romance ever written. There are those who insist that it is ver difficult for a novelist to portray with any verisimilitude the li of his own time, and that to hold the mirror up to nature of long time past is an utter impossibility. Whether or no Thac

ay has given us the talk and manners, the thought and life, of e Queen Anne period, he has succeeded in at least persuading s that the people of that time talked and acted as in *Henry smond.* As the tale is told in the person of Henry Esmond, ıe novelist is obliged to use the language of the eighteenth cen- ıry in narration and description, as well as in dialogue. The ıost exacting critics have found but few flaws in the style f *Henry Esmond.* Thackeray had the imaginative sympathy hich enabled him to live in the past; he had also with great ssiduity saturated himself with the literature of the eighteenth entury. He knew Swift, Steele, Addison, and others of less ote who belonged to that age, better than he knew the writings f his contemporaries. Perhaps the best reason of all is that his wn temperament was the temperament of the eighteenth century.

Walter Pater calls *Henry Esmond* "a perfect fiction," and aintsbury thinks it "The greatest book in its own special kind ver written." Trollope considers it without a peer, and praises s completeness of plot, its pathetic and almost divine tenderness, ıd its delicacy in its treatment of love. Harriet Martineau alled it the book of the century and was astonished at the ıthor's fertility.

The hero is Henry Esmond, the teller of the tale; the heroines re Lady Castlewood and her daughter Beatrix. But Henry is ot an unqualified hero, for Thackeray himself tells us that he as a prig. His defect, however, is lost sight of in the tender- ess and refinement that make him so thorough a gentleman. ady Castlewood, a woman of great charm and tenderness, but ot without weaknesses which Thackeray seems to think insepa- ble from women, in the end is married to Esmond. Beatrix, natural coquette, lovely and attractive, more ambitious for ower than for love, is a subtle creation. The spirit of melan- oly broods over the romance, and we have again the familiar frain, *Vanitas vanitatum.*

The Virginians, published in 1857 and 1858, is a sequel to *enry Esmond,* though its story is not a continuation of the reer of Esmond. The tale concerns itself with the two

brothers, the Esmond Warringtons, who are the American grandchildren of Esmond and Lady Castlewood, the only daughter of Esmond and his wife having married a Warrington. We meet Beatrix, whose first marriage had made her the wife of a tutor, her second that of a bishop, and now we meet her as the Baroness Bernstein, old and rich.

The Virginians falls short of Thackeray's best work, though the style is excellent and the philosophy of life mature. But more than style and philosophy are needed to make a great work of fiction. The desultory narrative, the frequent digressions — a habit that has here grown to excess — the formlessness of the plot — these are the characteristics marking a novel which Thackeray himself called stupid, but which Trollope says does not contain a vacant or dull page.

The Newcomes. — This genial and mature product of Thackeray's pen appeared in 1854–55, having been written in the years between his first and second journeys to America. For the novel as he told an American friend, he was to receive £4,000. There are competent critics who consider it his masterpiece; it is certain that in Colonel Newcome he has given us a rare portrait of the gentleman. Says Chesterton:

> "Thackeray called his book *The Newcomes*, but there is only one Newcome. On him our eyes are fixed when he first walks into the Cave of Harmony, and our eyes are fixed on him until he dies. He dies in great poverty, a pensioner of Gray Friars. . . . He has nothing left but his goodness, and with that he confronts God."

That Thackeray himself took the most sympathetic interest in the Colonel is illustrated by this story: While the novel was appearing James Russell Lowell met Thackeray on the streets of London. The novelist looked depressed, and seeing the kindly interest in the poet's eye said, "Come into Evans's and I'll tell you all about it. *I have killed the Colonel.*" After walking in and seating themselves at a table, Thackeray drew the fresh sheets of manuscript from his pocket and read with deep emotion, ending in a sob, the pathetic scene describing the death of Colonel Newcome.

Other leading characters are Ethel Newcome, a lovable man, and Clive Newcome, the son of the Colonel. Clive's e for his cousin Ethel lends coherence to the epic copiousness d variety of this novel of manners. They marry at last, but ly after Clive has had an unhappy marriage, and Ethel had t her youthful charm. Then there are

> Hobson Newcome with the straw in his mouth and the hands in his ckets, and the truly masculine decision to mind his own business, and his wife mind everything else; Lady Anne Newcome with one infallible eler or sense left in her, the power of knowing a gentleman, with which e salutes the Colonel; Barnes Newcome, the neat and nasty young man om the city, who is safe and successful enough to conquer the world, and s a soul like a dried small pea."

uch are the Newcomes who with their friends and enemies crowd e pages of this epitome of life. So rich and productive was e genius of Thackeray that in a novel like this he has scenes, aracters, episodes, observations, and studies in abundance suffi- ent to furnish many a later novelist with material enough for ree or four novels.

As a Lecturer.—*The English Humorists* and *The Four eorges,* published respectively in 1853 and 1861, were first ven to the public in the form of lectures. Dickens enjoyed blic speaking; Thackeray detested it, feeling as he describes *Philip,*

> for my part, own that I am in a state of tremor and absence of mind ore the operation; . . . in a condition of imbecility during the business; l that I am sure of a headache and indigestion the next morning."

In 1851 the lectures on the *Humorists* were given in places e London, Oxford, Cambridge, Manchester, and Edinburgh. nong the distinguished hearers were Charlotte Brontë, Monck- Milnes, Carlyle and his wife, Dickens, Macaulay, and Hallam. e lectures were carefully composed and intelligently read with- any striving after effect. Mr. Marzials, who heard him, ites:

"It is a full thirty years since I heard him, and yet I hold still clea in my memory the very tones in which he spoke of his reputation fo cynicism, and afterwards told us how his own child would come to hir and ask why he did not 'write a book like one of Mr. Dickens's books.'

And Longfellow has recorded that the soft, deep, sonorous voic of the lecturer "was pleasant to hear." In regard to his publi speaking the truth seems to be that when he read his carefully prepared lectures he did very well, but that when he spoke with out manuscript he frequently broke down in embarrassment.

He lectured to make money, for he had the laudable ambition to provide an income for his family in case of his death. This also is the motive that induced him to set sail in the autumn o 1852 for the United States. He lectured with profit and pleasure in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington Richmond, and in smaller places. After an absence of almost six months he returned to England.

In October, 1855, he again visited the United States to deliver his new lectures on *The Four Georges*. He remained unti April, 1856, lecturing with much success. In England he was afterwards severely criticized for ridiculing in democratic Amer ica the voluptuous, extravagant, weak George the Fourth and contrasting him with that George whose surname was Washing ton. At a public dinner in 1857 he replied to the criticism "And I believe, for my part, that in speaking the truth as we hold it, of a bad sovereign, we are paying no disrespect at all to a good one."

Other Writings and Last Days. — In 1859 Thackeray became editor of the *Cornhill Magazine,* resigning in April, 1862. Though an excellent judge of good writing, Thackeray was too sensitive and indulgent to be a first-class editor. In this magazine there appeared from Thackeray's own pen such contributions as *The Roundabout Papers, Lovel the Widower, The Adventures of Philip,* and *Denis Duval,* a novel, like Dickens's *Edwin Drood,* interrupted by death. *The Roundabout Papers* are examples of Thackeray's best essay work; the two completed novels fall short of his best fiction.

Thackeray died on Christmas Eve, 1863. On the 30th of December, attended by an immense concourse, including the celebrities in art and literature, his body was laid away in Kensal Green Cemetery. Though it was known that he had had brief severe attacks of illness for several years, his end came as a shock to even his intimate friends. "I saw him," says Dickens, "shortly before Christmas at the Athenaeum Club, when he told me he had been in bed three days. . . . He was very cheerful and looked very bright."

As a Man.— Thackeray was large in stature, being over six feet tall, with a head having a cranial capacity of 1,660 c.c. "A big, fine weeping man," Carlyle once called him. Like many large men, he was tender-hearted and sensitive. Who can read his four great novels, especially *Henry Esmond* and *The Newcomes,* without feeling the pervasive tenderness of the author? And yet this man for years was misunderstood; he was called a cynic. He is at times a satirist, but satire is not cynicism. He honored good men and good women, and his faith in the good God had a beautiful simplicity, but he, like Carlyle, hated sham. If to hate sham and snobbery and to admire truth and sincerity be the mark of a cynic, then Thackeray must plead guilty to the charge. His letters and his books, for both letters and books give us an intimate revelation of the man, show Thackery to be a thorough gentleman. Reserved, free from ostentation, generous to a fault, quick to respond to every cry for help, manly in his appreciation of the worth and talents of his contemporaries in art and literature, strong in his endurance of his great domestic tragedy, beautiful in his affectionate devotion to his daughters, devoid of vulgarity in his life as well as in his fiction — such was Thackeray, the gentleman. In the concluding paragraphs of *George the Fourth,* that scathing denunciation of a worthless monarch, we have Thackeray's conception of what it is to be a gentleman.

"What is it to be a gentleman? Is it to have lofty aims, to lead a pure life, to keep your honor virgin; to have the esteem of your fellow-citizens, and the love of your fireside; to bear good fortune meekly; to

suffer evil with constancy; and through evil or good to maintain truth always? Show me the happy man whose life exhibits these qualities, and him we will salute as gentleman, whatever his rank may be."

His fondness for children was one of his most amiable characteristics. He once told Dickens he could never see a boy without wanting to give the boy a sovereign.

"To see a hundred boys marshalled in a chapel or old hall [he writes], to hear their sweet fresh voices when they chant, and look in their brave, calm faces; I say, does not the sight and sound of them smite you, somehow, with a pang of exquisite kindness?"

Though not a churchman, he was deeply religious. He had the simple faith of a devout believer; unlike Carlyle and Tennyson, he was untroubled by the philosophic doubt of his day. To him Christianity was the religion of love and charity; a practice, not a dogma.

"Biblical criticism might proceed on its devastating career [writes Lewis Melville], atheism might be rampant in the land, and the struggle between the churches of the earth become more and more embittered, but nothing of all this could touch his simple faith, 'I believe in God the Father!'"

As Reader and Critic.—The youthful Thackeray was an omnivorous reader, especially of fiction, poetry, and history. Later in life he said to a young cousin, "Read a tremendous lot of history." Of Carlyle's *French Revolution* he wrote:

"The reader needs not be told that this book is written in an eccentric prose, here and there disfigured by grotesque conceits and images; but, for all this, it betrays most extraordinary powers — learning, observation, and humor. . . . Above all, it has no cant. . . . It possesses genius if any book ever did."

Concerning this criticism Carlyle wrote to his brother:

"The writer is one Thackeray, a half monstrous Cornish giant, kind of painter, Cambridge man, and Paris newspaper correspondent, who is now writing for his life in London. . . . His article is rather like him, and, I suppose, calculated to do the book good."

In his Cambridge days Thackeray was for a time greatly interested in Shelley. He then called *The Revolt of Islam* "a most

eautiful poem — though the story is absurd, and the republican entiments conveyed in it, if possible, more absurd." While at Veimar he, of course, fell under the influence of Goethe and chiller, especially admiring the writings of Schiller. Of French riters he read Montaigne, Hugo, Balzac, Eugene Sue, and umas. Of these he admired Montaigne and Dumas, at one me saying, "Dumas is wonderful. He is better than Walter cott."

In his younger days he bitterly denounced Miss Landon, Miss Iitford, Mrs. Trollope, and the author of *Ernest Maltravers*. Ie praises Swift as "an immense genius," but laments his savage atire; acknowledges Sterne's humor and pathos, but condemns is effeminate sentimentalism and "gift of weeping." For Conreve, Wycherley, and Farquhar, with their heroes and heroines f flimsy morals, he has no liking. His sympathy is with Addion, Steele, and Goldsmith. In his preference for Pope as the reatest of English poets, and in his opinion that while Milton as a great poet "he was such a bore that no one could read im," he shows his limitations as a critic. As to the novelists, e placed Fielding and Smollett above Richardson, acknowledgng Fielding as his master both in matter and manner, going so ar as to say, "My English would have been much better if I ad read Fielding before I was ten." For Macaulay, Charlotte rontë, Tennyson, Dickens, and other contemporaries, he usually ad words of generous praise. He was of too large a nature o begrudge the popularity of his great contemporary in fiction, hough he felt that Dickens was not a deep thinker, but had a clear and bright-eyed intelligence, which is better than philosohy. I think he is equal to Fielding and Smollett — at any rate o Smollett. He is not such a scholar as Fielding was." And at nother time he writes, "He knows that my books are a protest gainst his — that if the one set are true, the other must be lse."

Style and Influence. — Ever since his death there has been a eady growth in Thackeray's reputation, and while there is still a versity of opinion as to his rank as a novelist, the opinion as to

the high quality of his style is unanimous. Long ago Carlyle said, "Nobody in our day, I should say, wrote with such perfection of style." And as discriminating a critic as Mr. Brownell, who objects to the contentious special pleading of Macaulay, the exaltation of Carlyle, the rhapsody of Ruskin, and the periodic stateliness of Gibbon, finds the style of Thackeray perfectly sound and classical. It is simple, copious, and natural.

"Its ease is absolutely effortless. It is like Raphael's line. He can make it say anything he chooses, anything his characters choose in their several dialects. . . . Like his art and like the world of his imagination, it is an outgrowth of the most interesting personality, perhaps, that has expressed itself in prose."

His influence upon English fiction has been decidedly wholesome. His novels, especially *Vanity Fair* and *Pendennis,* were a protest against the extravagant romanticism of the poor imitators of Sir Walter Scott. "By his ridicule and his creative work," writes W. L. Cross, "he brought the novel once more into the stream of realistic tendency, where since *Pickwick* it had not kept a steady course." Strainings after melodramatic effects, ghastly deaths, drownings, strangulations, blackest of inhuman villains, angelic saints, and faultless heroes, as well as the customary settings of antiquated castles in ruined splendor, tournaments, jousts, and haunted halls with gorgeous knights, have no place in Thackeray's art.

Mr. Howells, an ardent and uncompromising foe to romance, thinks Thackeray could not free himself from his environment; that he is in part "a survival of the romanticistic period whose traces in others (especially Bulwer and Disraeli) he knew how to burlesque." This may be taken to mean that the realism of Thackeray falls short of the ideal of Howells, for it is true that Thackeray is not an extreme realist. It is also true that he is dangerously profuse and he is prone to indulge in confidential asides which stay the progress of the story; yet in his hatred of sham, in his avoidance of cheap effects, in his purity of tone, in his love of what is good and noble, he has set a standard for all writers of English fiction.

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CHAPTER XVII

George Eliot

GEORGE ELIOT is not the first Englishwoman to write novel. Before her we find, to name but a few, Miss Burney's *Evelina,* Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre,* a book still widel read; Miss Edgeworth's tales, Mrs. Gaskell's *Cranford,* and th novels of Jane Austen — novels almost extravagantly praised b some modern disciples of realism. But with the exception o Jane Austen, which one of these names can bear comparison wit that of George Eliot? And in the case of Jane Austen the emi nence is one granted by literary criticism rather than by popula approval. In our own time we have the fiction of Mrs. Hum phrey Ward, and that of a hundred lesser lights, but the highes praise we can bestow on any of our modern women who writ fiction is that in breadth and depth, in substance and form, he novels approach the standard set by George Eliot.

The best of George Eliot's fiction bears comparison with th best of Thackeray, or Scott, or Dickens. Her style lacks th literary finish of Thackeray's, she is not a natural story-telle like Scott, and she is wanting in that wholesome exuberanc which characterizes Dickens; but she has a distinction all he own. She is the creator of a new type of fiction, the intro spective, psychological novel. As some one has pointed ou Dickens shows us *how* a man acts; George Eliot tells us *wh* he acts.

Parents and Childhood. — Mary Ann Evans, generally know as George Eliot, was born at Arbury Farm, Warwickshire, o November 22, 1819. Her father, Robert Evans, was a man c character, strong both in body and mind. His ability as a ma of affairs led Francis Newdigate, son of the man who establishe the Oxford Newdigate prize in poetry, to engage him as manage

of his estate. His efficiency in attending to this business led others to engage him, until he had all the work a busy man could do. As a man's opinions are apt to be biased by his business interests, we are not surprised to learn that this middle-class Englishman was a pronounced Tory. "I was accustomed," says his distinguished daughter, "to hear him utter the word 'Government' in a tone that charged it with awe and made it a part of my effective religion." It is usually said that her father is the prototype of Adam Bede and of Mr. Garth in *Middlemarch*. We must not infer, however, that in these two men the novelist has given us a literal picture of her father. The mother of the future novelist was Christiana Pearson, the second wife of Robert Evans. Of her it is said that she had "a considerable dash of Mrs. Poyser in her veins."

The childhood days of Mary Evans were not dissimilar from those of any Warwickshire child living in a prosperous household a hundred years ago. There were three children in the family, Christiana, Isaac, and Mary Ann. When Mary Ann, the youngest in the group, was four years old, the family moved to Griff, "a charming red brick, ivy-covered house on the Arbury estate." That she always felt the need of loving someone with dependent devotion is illustrated by her history from the cradle to the grave; in her maturity, shortly after the loss of Mr. Lewes, she surprised her friends by marrying Mr. Cross. In her childhood she lavished the affection of her whole heart upon her brother with something of the intensity described in *The Mill on the Floss* in the relationship between Maggie and Tom.

Schooldays. — As a child she read Æsop's *Fables* and *Joe Miller*, and what is more to the purpose, *Waverley*. Among her favorite books were De Foe's *History of the Devil*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Rasselas*. She attended school at Attleboro, Nuneaton, and Coventry. At Coventry she had excellent teachers in French, German, and music. Her teachers knew that they were dealing with an unusually intelligent girl. Her schooldays were not prolonged. It is remarkable that this young girl, whose writings

created the highest type of the intellectual novel, ended her school-days at the age of sixteen. To be keenly alive, intellectually curious, is better than to have an accumulation of facts. Too many minds seem to emerge from formal instruction in a dazed or numbed condition. George Eliot's training was not of the best; her household duties, for she was taken from school to manage her father's household, prevented that freedom for study and that elasticity of mind unburdened by drudgery that are needed for the best results, but she did maintain an eager curiosity that made life and learning one. When nineteen years of age she had gathered together

"an assemblage of disjointed specimens of history, ancient and modern; scraps of poetry picked up from Shakspere, Cowper, Wordsworth, and Milton; newspaper topics; morsels of Addison and Bacon, Latin verbs, geometry, entomology, and chemistry; reviews and metaphysics — all arrested and petrified and smothered by the fast thickening everyday accession of actual events, relative anxieties, and household cares and vexations."

It is also interesting to note that at this stage of her development she had serious objections to the reading of novels. Why should we read fiction when there is so little time for the acquisition of real knowledge? Study history; waste no time on things that have never happened. Such is the youthful opinion of one of the great masters of fiction. Her mind found its nutriment in such serious reading as Milner's *Church History* and Taylor's *Ancient Christianity and the Oxford Tracts.*

New Home and New Friends. — When George Eliot was twenty-one and her father sixty-one they moved from Griff to Coventry. This change in residence had a very important influence upon her life, for she passed from the seclusion of the country into town life. Coventry was not a literary center, but for a small place it was rich in persons whose interests were intellectual. There was Charles Bray, a ribbon manufacturer, who had published *The Philosophy of Necessity,* and whose wife was the sister of Charles Hennell, the writer of an *Enquiry Concerning the Origin of Christianity.* Both Bray and Hennell had a

ong influence upon the mind of George Eliot, and both were eptics in their religious beliefs. So decidedly was George Eliot luenced that she shocked her conservative father by telling him at she would no longer go to church. This led to a serious agreement, and the father resolved to abandon the Coventry me and take up his residence with his married daughter. orge Eliot planned to go to Leamington and support herself teaching. But fortunately a reconciliation took place, the ughter agreeing to go to church, and for the next seven years, til the father's death in 1849, they lived together at Coventry. What shall I be without him?" she said. "It will seem as if rt of my moral nature were gone." This does not mean, wever, that she and her father had reached a common opinion regard to religious belief; it simply means that she loved r father.

Her first literary work of importance was the translation of rauss's *Life of Jesus*. This engaged her energies for two ars, from 1844 to 1846. This is not an orthodox life of Jesus, d George Eliot's heterodoxy, in bloom before the translation s begun, was undoubtedly nourished by her laborious task in nslating Strauss. This work was ended with a joy that finds pression in her letters of that period. That her work was well ne is the opinion of a reviewer who soon after the appearance the book wrote in the *Prospective:*

"A faithful, elegant, and scholarlike translation. Whoever reads these umes . . . must be pleased with the easy, perspicuous, idiomatic, and monious force of the English style."

After the death of her father she was fortunately able to join e Brays, her best friends, in a trip to the Continent. In July e reached Geneva, where she stayed for eight months, the Brays the meantime having returned to England. While in Geneva e studied French and mathematics.

Westminster Review.—In September, 1851, George Eliot ame the assistant editor of *The Westminster Review,* of which apman was the editor. Her new position was especially valu-

able in that it brought her into association with some of th brightest minds of the century. Among those who became con tributors and whom she met were Herbert Spencer, J. S. Mil Carlyle, Froude, James Martineau, Francis Newman, and W. E Forster.

"Her editorial work [writes Leslie Stephen] seems to have bee absorbing and dispiriting. It was too much like flogging a dead horse The public declined to care for the admirable articles addressed to them and showed no very keen hankering after sound philosophy."

George Henry Lewes.— It was while she was undergoing th drudgery of the assistant editorship of the *Review* that there cam into her life an influence that was to change her career. Thi influence was George Henry Lewes, at this time the literar editor of the *Leader*. Lewes was a versatile genius. I believ it was Thackeray who said, in view of the many things tha Lewes could do, that he should not be surprised to see Lewe riding in Piccadilly on a white elephant. He had written a play a novel, and criticisms upon German, French, Italian, Spanish and Greek literature. His *Biographical History of Philosophy Life of Goethe,* and a book on physiology show the variety, i not the depth, of his attainments. In conversation he was bril liantly attractive; in person he was described by Douglas Jerrol as the "ugliest man in London," a distinction which he may no have deserved. Whatever his physical characteristics may hav been, his personal charm was such as to make him a very attract ive man.

The relationship between George Eliot and George Henr Lewes has occasioned much discussion. The facts are these Lewes had married in 1840, but his wife, because of an infatu ation for another man, had twice deserted him. With a mag nanimity that is to be admired, Lewes forgave the first offens and received the erring wife into his home. She ran away second time to cast her lot with her paramour. It was after thes events that Lewes met George Eliot, loved her, asked her to liv with him as his wife, although a divorce at the time was impos

ble. To this she agreed, and they left England for a visit to ermany. Her friends were shocked, and the public condemned e couple. George Eliot never regretted her decision, and always aintained her relationship with Mr. Lewes was the result of a ise decision. She always spoke and wrote of Mr. Lewes in e highest terms, and on his side we hear the highest expressions love and devotion.

No moralist can defend the step taken by these violators of ıblic opinion. There is a Kantian doctrine or principle that aches that the test of conduct is, "If my individual act were ade universal, what would be the result?" Tested by that rule, eorge Eliot's conduct must appear reprehensible. In an editorial ı this subject a charitable critic wrote:

"George Eliot preached the doctrine of renunciation — the doctrine of lf-sacrifice — the doctrine of breaking the neck of inclination, though ff as steel, under the foot of duty; but it was not given to her to give a ınscendent example of this Christian virtue in her own life."

Becomes a Writer of Fiction. — George Eliot has given us r own account of how she became a writer of fiction.

"September, 1856, made a new era in my life, for it was then I began write fiction. It had always been a vague dream of mine that some time other I might write a novel; and my shadowy conception of what the vel was to be, varied, of course, from one epoch of my life to another. ıt I never went further toward the actual writing of the novel than an roductory chapter describing a Staffordshire village and the life of the ighboring farm-houses; and as the years passed on I lost any hope that hould ever be able to write a novel."

It was through the encouragement of Mr. Lewes that she gan her first story. He told her, "You must write a story." ne morning while in a dreamy doze there came into her mind the le *The Sad Fortunes of the Reverend Amos Barton.* "What a pital title!" exclaimed Mr. Lewes. As she was writing he ould say, "It may be a failure — it may be that you are unable write fiction. Or, perhaps, it may be just good enough to war- nt your trying again." Or he thought it might turn out to be masterpiece. But his leading impression was that while the

novel would not be poor, yet it would likely be wanting in dramatic presentation. He used to say, "You have wit, description, and philosophy — these go a good way towards the production of a novel. It is worth while for you to try the experiment."

"When she had finished the first part of *Amos Barton,* Mr. Lewes was no longer skeptical about her ability to write dialogue. The next question was whether she had the power of pathos. This was to be determined by the way in which the death of Milly was to be treated. 'One night G. went to town on purpose to leave me a quiet evening for writing it. I wrote the chapter from the news brought by the shepherd to Mrs. Hackit, to the moment when Amos is dragged from the bed-side, and I read it to G. when he came home. We both cried over it, and then he came to me and kissed me, saying, "I think your pathos is better than your fun."'"

The story, for which she was paid fifty guineas, appeared in the January number of *Blackwood. Amos Barton* was followed by *Mr. Gilfil's Love Story* and *Janet's Repentance.* The three stories were then published in a book under the title *Scenes from Clerical Life.* As these stories and the later *Adam Bede* were full of local color, there was great curiosity in certain villages in Warwickshire as to who was the mysterious and gifted George Eliot. Suspicion fastened upon a Mr. Liggins, who had some local reputation as a mediocre poet. Liggins was not unwilling to pose as the writer of clever fiction. When the public was about to subscribe some money to assist the pseudo-literary genius, George Eliot was forced to reveal her identity.

Adam Bede. — Her next step is indicated by a note in her journal, with the date of October 22, 1857, "Began my new novel, *Adam Bede.*" It was published in a three-volume edition in 1858. It was immediately successful, seven editions appearing during the first year. Her remuneration was such as to place the family in what we usually call "comfortable circumstances." The original agreement with her publisher was that she should receive £800 for a four years' copyright. Blackwood generously gave her back the copyright and an additional £800, and offered her £2,000 for 4,000 copies of her next novel. In this connection

may be recorded that later, for the appearance of *Romola* in ne *Cornhill Magazine,* George Smith offered her £10,000, but 7,000 was accepted; and for *Middlemarch,* which did not appear n magazine form, she received a still larger sum.

Almost as gratifying as the financial returns from her first ovel was the praise from the leading men of letters. Herbert Spencer, Froude, Dickens, and Charles Reade were among the nost enthusiastic admirers, the last named declaring that "*Adam Bede* was the finest thing since Shakspere."

There is a freshness of life about *Adam Bede* that has made t one of the most popular of her novels; in the opinion of many ritics of today it is regarded as her masterpiece. The contrast etween it and *Romola* is the contrast between God's out-of-doors vith the odor of the the fresh earth and a library rich in learned omes. In *Adam Bede* we have the experiences and observaions of a writer who without effort reproduces the life with vhich she has been intimately acquainted; in *Romola* we have cenes and characters of an alien country brought before us by gifted woman who has labored long and patiently among books. Her picture of rural life in England convinces by its naturalness; her panorama of the rich, varied Florentine life in the time f Savonarola astonishes us by its erudition.

The characters in *Adam Bede* are sharply individualized. Dinah Morris, the lovable Methodist preacher, is drawn with uch a sympathetic touch that it is hard to believe that George Eliot had lost all faith in the simple religion of her childhood; Adam himself is an admirable portrait of a sturdy, manly, noble vorkingman; but the masterpiece is the inimitable Mrs. Poyser, character Shaksperean in its individuality. She is an "irrestible humorist," worthy to be enrolled among the immortals long with Sam Weller and Falstaff. Against Dinah the criticism has been made that, while she is drawn lovingly and skillully, she is insipid because she lacks that touch of frailty which nakes the whole world kin, but this charge can never be made gainst Mrs. Poyser, who surely is not too good for human ature's daily food. A critic writes:

"Her dairy is the center of the whole microcosm. . . . She represent the very spirit of the place; and her influence is the secret of the harmon of the little world of squire and parson and parish clerk and schoolmaste and blacksmith and carpenter and shepherd and carter. Each of thes types is admirably sketched in turn, but the pivot of the whole is the farm in which Mrs. Poyser displays her conversational powers."

Artistically considered, the story is defective, as is true of her other novels, with the exception of *Silas Marner;* there is a lack of unity. The story might have been called *Dinah Morris* or *Hetty Sorrel,* as well as *Adam Bede.* After our interest has reached its climax in the plight of poor, frail Hetty, who goes to Botany Bay instead of to the gallows, we are suddenly called upon to take up a love story centering in Adam and Dinah, and the book ends with the marriage of Adam and Dinah. Mr. Hardy's treatment of Tess in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* is a contrast both as to unity of effect and as to the grim willingness to permit the wheels of the gods to grind out their inexorable doom regardless of the feelings of the "gentle reader."

One of the charms of this novel is its picture of rural England with its country people and their simple Christian virtues. There is less of that somber melancholy that steeps some of her later writings. We learn that through the baptism of sorrow and suffering comes the purification from selfishness. The following passage illustrates the naturalness with which she passes from description into the deeper philosophic reflections of a mind that dwelt much on the mystery of good and evil. It is taken from the chapter on "The Hidden Dread" in *Adam Bede:*

"Bright February days have a stronger charm of hope about them than any other days of the year. One likes to pause in the mild rays of the sun, and look over the gates at the patient plough-horses turning at the end of the furrow, and think that the beautiful year is all before one. The birds seem to feel just the same; their notes are as clear as the clear air. There are no leaves on the trees and hedgerows, but how green all the grassy fields are! and the dark purplish brown of the ploughed earth and the bare branches is beautiful too. What a glad world this looks like, as one drives or rides along the valleys and over the hills! I have often thought so when, in foreign countries, where the fields and woods have looked to me like our English Loamshire — the rich land tilled with just

much care, the woods rolling down the gentle slopes to the green adows — I have come on something by the roadside which has reminded that I am not in Loamshire: an image of a great agony — the agony the Cross. It has stood, perhaps, by the clustering apple-blossoms, or the broad sunshine by the cornfield, or at a turning by the wood where lear brook was gurgling below; and surely, if there came a traveller to s world who knew nothing of the story of man's life upon it, this ony would seem to him strangely out of place in the midst of this ous nature. He would not know that, hidden behind the apple-blossoms, among the golden corn, or under the shrouding boughs of the wood, ere might be a human heart beating heavily with anguish — perhaps a ung blooming girl, not knowing where to turn for refuge from swift- vancing shame; understanding no more of this life of ours than a olish lost lamb wandering farther and farther in the nightfall of the ely heath, yet tasting the bitterest of life's bitterness.

"Such things are sometimes hidden among the sunny fields and behind e blossoming orchards; and the sound of the gurgling brook, if you me close to one spot behind a small bush, would be mingled for your ear th a despairing human sob. No wonder man's religion has much sorrow it; no wonder he needs a suffering God."

The Mill on the Floss. — This novel, which in popularity valed *Adam Bede,* appeared in April, 1860. The manuscript re this inscription:

"To my beloved husband, George Henry Lewes, I give this MS. of third book, written in the sixth year of our life together, at Holly dge, South Field, Wandsworth, and finished 21st March, 1860."

hen she had finished the task she felt sad that she no longer uld live with her people on the banks of the Floss.

In one respect *The Mill on the Floss* is the most interesting all her books, for it is the spiritual autobiography of George iot herself. Maggie Tulliver is George Eliot, not in the sense at we have a literal and exact transcript of the life of the author the doings and sayings of Maggie, but in the broader sense in ich the soul of the writer is imaged in the longings and aspira- ns of the heroine. It is a commonplace that George Eliot is psychological novelist, a patient seeker after the motives that spire action, a discriminating analyst with the added gift of agination. In *The Mill,* as she was wont to call this novel,

we have an intimate revelation of a young girl's heart. Here i the story of an impulsive, imaginative child living with common place people in commonplace surroundings; a child eager t learn, quick to love, and ready to invest the trivial with th witchery of romance. In Maggie snatching at the crumbs o learning and reveling in the religious mysticism of à Kempis, i is not hard to see the youthful Mary Ann.

It is generally said that George Eliot was stronger in th delineation of her feminine characters than in her portrayal o the masculine. Mr. Stephen thinks she was too thoroughl feminine to be at home in the psychology of the male animal Her women are drawn with an unerring touch, whether she i dealing with the vigorous Mrs. Poyser, the vain Hetty, th religious Dinah, or the warm-hearted Maggie. Her Seths an Toms and Stephens are not altogether convincing.

In *The Mill* we have again that defectiveness in plot that w noted in *Adam Bede*. The first two volumes (the story appeare in three) deal leisurely and sympathetically with the developmen of a poetic soul amid prosaic conditions. George Eliot hersel felt that her enjoyment of this part of the story led her to linge longer than she should; the third volume rushes to a catastroph that is not closely related to the events in the first part of th story. Stephen Guest, an insipid young man of the coxcom species, is suddenly introduced, that Maggie may fall in lov with him and go to her downfall. That young girls fall in lov with insipid and dandified youth is not to be disputed; but tha a girl like Maggie should fall in love with Stephen does not seem probable. The objection is not that the author has shown u the degradation of a high-strung nature, for it is unfortunatel true that a lamentable ending to high aspirations is not uncom mon, but that this refined and sensitive girl should be fascinate by uninteresting, prosaic, comfortable Stephen Guest is incom prehensible — at least to a man. It is not strange that a promi nent novelist, Henry James, has said, "The chief defect — indee the only serious one — in *The Mill on the Floss* is its conclusion.

Silas Marner. — Silas Marner, begun in November, 186

inished the following February, was published in March, 1861. Artistically considered, it is the best of all her novels, although his does not mean it is the greatest. The plot is simple, and here is a coherence unbroken by any superfluous incidents. It s classic in its directness and simplicity.

Silas has lost faith in God and man; the injustice done him has made him a recluse. An abandoned child totters into his home; he cares for it and his soul is re-humanized by his love for a waif. The idea is beautiful, possibly more pretty than probable.

"At least, if one had to dispose of a deserted child, the experiment of dropping it by the cottage of a solitary in the hope that he would bring t up to its advantage and to his own regeneration would hardly be tried by a judicious philanthropist."

George Eliot herself may have felt this objection, for she thought he theme belonged to poetry rather than prose, and when she had written it she said she would not have been surprised if it had failed to interest any one, since Wordsworth was dead — evidently believing the theme one that would have appealed trongly to the author of *Michael*.

Its picture of rural England, of the lonely life of the hermit, he linen-weaver of Raveloe, the dramatic situations, and the homely humor in tavern and village, the exquisite workmanship nd charm of style, have deservedly made this a favorite. In ddition to these qualities we have the prevailing ethical mood f the author illustrated in the law of compensation. Silas is gain made a member of the social order by his goodness to the bandoned child; Godfrey Cass, who has deserted wife and hild, and, upon the death of one and the loss of the other, had harried again and lived a life of prosperity, finds later, as he imself says:

"There's debts we can't pay like money debts, by paying extra for the ears that have slipped by. While I've been putting off and putting off, he trees have been growing — it's too late now. Marner was in the right what he said about a man's turning away a blessing from his door: it lls to somebody else."

Romola. — This book marks a transition in the literary career of George Eliot. The preceding novels were the products of an imagination working upon familiar English material; *Romola* was manufactured from material laboriously gathered from libraries. Her earlier stories deal with contemporary life; *Romola* deals with the Florentine life of the far-off fifteenth century. To write an entertaining historical novel does not seem to be a very difficult task; to write one true to life and history is, in the opinion of many, an impossibility.

George Eliot always took her work seriously and never had that facility of composition enjoyed by Dickens and Scott. To prepare herself for the writing of *Romola,* she visited Italy, and afterwards read many volumes dealing with its history, especially that of the fifteenth century. In the record of the books read by her in 1861 we find lives of Savonarola, Machiavelli, Burchiello, Petrarch; histories by Sismondi; letters by Filelfo and others. As an illustration of her zeal we find recorded in her diary of December 13: "Read Poggiana. In the afternoon walked to Mollini's and brought back Savonarola's *Dialogus de Veritate Prophetica* and *Compendium Revelationum* for £4!"

On June 9, 1863, she writes in her journal, "Put the last stroke to *Romola.* Ebenezer!" The book had lain like a burden on her mind. She once said that she began it a young woman and ended it an old woman. While the book was not read so eagerly as the earlier ones, perhaps because of its first appearance in the *Cornhill Magazine* as a serial, or perhaps because of its length and erudition, it was highly praised by many of her contemporaries, some of whom called it a masterpiece. Today the opinion of Mr. Frederick Harrison seems to be the one generally held: "*Romola* is certainly a wonderful monument of literary accomplishment; but it remains a *tour de force,* too elaborate, too labored, too intricate, too erudite."

Both Romola and Savonarola are impressive characters: Romola, the woman of lofty nature seeking truth but confused by the divided interests of the renaissance and Christianity;

avonarola, the impassioned reformer whose zeal verges upon naticism. However, the unforgettable character is Tito — one the immortals of English fiction. Here is a fit task for our oralizing, psychological novelist — to give us the incarnation of e idea that a refined nature by forever shrinking from the disgreeable is doomed to tragic demoralization. With what detail e are led to see this evolution of a soul! "Tito was experiencing that inexorable law of human souls," we are told by this sistent moralist, "that we prepare ourselves for sudden deeds y the reiterated choice of good or evil that determines character." No one who has followed the career of Tito from the day e appears in Florence, a bright, beautiful youth, to his tragic nd on the banks of the Arno can forget this portrayal of the egeneration of a soul.

Other Writings. — After *Romola* came *Felix Holt, The Spanh Gypsy,* a poem, *Middlemarch, Daniel Deronda,* and *The npressions of Theophrastus Such.* Blackwood, the publisher, ave her £5,000 for *Felix Holt,* a novel dealing with the political eforms of 1832. Although Mr. Brownell thinks it will always remain a highly interpretative picture of English political and cial history," the novel is considered far inferior to her best ork. *The Spanish Gypsy* is full of thought, but is lacking in nagination and feeling.

Middlemarch was published in eight parts, the last part ppearing in December, 1872. It was more popular than *Romola,* ,000 having been sold by 1875. The book introduces us into e midst of middle-class respectability in England. One critic lls it a half dozen novels in one, "the microcosm of a community rather than a story connected with a unified plot and set characters. And it is perhaps the writer's fullest expression her philosophy of life." Even the minor characters are treated ith that full sympathy that characterizes the work of the author. ne interest centers about the matrimonial life of Dorothea edded to the wooden Casaubon, and Lydgate married to the allow Rosamund.

Daniel Deronda appeared in 1876. It is a study of Anglo-

Jewish domestic life, a novel with a new type of hero. The one objection that has been urged is that the hero has been drawn as too refined, too near perfection to be human. His idea is to give national existence to his people. Her portrayal of Mordecai and Daniel has been highly praised by scholarly Jews but the prevalent feeling as to the bookishness of her conception is that expressed by Mr. Leland when he said, "One day she told me that in order to write *Daniel Deronda* she had read through two hundred books. I longed to tell her that she had better have learned Yiddish and talked with two hundred Jews." In the story of Gwendolen and her marriage with the selfish Grandcourt we find George Eliot at her best.

Of *Theophrastus Such* and her poems we need but say that the former consists of series of thoughts and impressions, and that her poems do not rank with the highest. However, there is one short passage in her poetry that will not soon be forgotten:

> "O may I join the choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence: live
> In pulses stirr'd to generosity,
> In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
> For miserable aims that end with self,
> In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
> And with their mild persistence urge man's search
> To vaster issues."

Last Years.—During all these years of literary activity George Eliot and Mr. Lewes had been living happily and prosperously. He impressed every one by his whole-hearted devotion, and all were equally impressed by her great admiration for him. He was an excellent business manager and arranged all details attending her relations with her publishers; he was also stimulating and helpful by his criticisms and appreciations. At their Sunday afternoon receptions the literary and scientific celebrities of the English world met to enjoy the society of a most brilliant woman and a versatile man. Among the visitors were Huxley and Spencer of the scientific world, Millais and Burne

nes of the artistic, and Browning and Tennyson of the purely erary.

In his sixty-second year Mr. Lewes died after a short illness; orge Eliot was prostrated by grief, but soon busied herself in tablishing a scholarship or studentship in his honor, open to th sexes, for the encouragement of research in physiology. ne studentship yielded an income of nearly a thousand dollars. ewes had died in November, 1878. She greatly surprised both r intimate friends and the public by marrying John Walter oss in May, 1880. He was a friend of long standing. The ly explanation of her marriage is that hers was a nature that eded some one to love. Her own life was not spared long to joy the companionship of Mr. Cross, for on December 22, 1880, e quietly passed away.

Personal Traits. — We have learned somewhat of her personal aracteristics in the preceding pages, but a few words may tingly be added. She was passionately fond of music and had me skill in that art; she enjoyed traveling; liked modern real-ic art; and was fond of animals. Her health was never very od, and it is not surprising to learn, in the light of the prevail-g melancholy of her novels, that she was subject to moods of spondency. Although very intellectual, she was essentially a oman in taste and sympathy. She was not too erudite to joy the art of housekeeping. It is worthy of note that she ade an excellent step-mother for the three children whose own other had deserted them. Her nature was broad and tolerant, th all the tenderness of a rich and loving soul. Her unex-cted popularity left in her no taint of egotism.

Mrs. Fields, an American, has given us a charming picture George Eliot:

"At first I thought her tall; for one could not think that such a head ld rest on an ordinary woman's shoulders. But, as she rose up, her ure appeared of but medium height. She received us very kindly. . . . distance was removed by her courtesy. Her manners are very sweet, ause very simple and free from affectation. To me her welcome was more grateful as that of one woman to another. There is a sort of

free-masonry among women, by which they understand at once those with whom they have any intellectual sympathy. A few words, and all reserve was gone. 'Come, sit by me on this sofa,' she said; and instantly, seated side by side, we were deep in conversation. It is in such intimacy one feels the magnetism of a large mind informed by a true woman's heart. . . Looking into that clear, calm eye, one sees a transparent nature, a soul of goodness and truth, an impression that is deepened as you listen to her soft and gentle tones. A low voice is said be an excellent thing in woman. It is a special charm of the most finely cultured English ladies. But never did a sweeter voice fascinate a listener. . . . But I should do her great injustice if I gave the impression that there was in her conversation any attempt at display. There is no wish to shine. . . . She does not engross the conversation, but is more eager to listen than to talk. . . . You do not feel awed by her genius, but only quickened by it, as something that calls out all that is better and truer. While there is no attempt to impress you with her intellectual superiority, you naturally feel elevated into a higher sphere."

As a Writer.— The intellectual element predominates in her fiction. George Eliot came to her work as novelist at the age of thirty-seven; she had been occupied in studies of a philosophical and religious character; her mind had been disciplined by logic and metaphysics. No prominent novelist has had a more ponderous equipment in philosophy, and this may explain why the intellectual quality of her fiction is more impressive than the dramatic and artistic. She is more of a philosopher than an artist. Pedantry destroys art, and there are times when George Eliot's intellectuality verges upon pedantry. In the earlier novels we find a warmth and glow suggestive of the emotionalism of her youth, but as she ventures into other fields, failing in the highest type of imagination and without the gift of the "born story teller," her philosophic mind asserts its supremacy and she offers us a theory of life instead of life itself.

Her high seriousness is another decided characteristic. In no other great novelist in English literature do we find such an emphasis placed upon the moral law; no one insists more vigorously upon the necessity of following the highest ideals. No faith or love or hope but duty is the word that looms large in her consciousness. In her fiction the great contests are waged, not in

ttlefield or tournament, but in the soul of her characters. She es the word Nemesis. No preacher insists more vigorously an she upon the text, "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he so reap." This doctrine of retribution is carried so far that we iss the possibility of escape from the consequences of wrong-ing through the intervention of that "divine grace" which fects the miracle of regeneration. Both religion and modern ience in the teaching of psychology, as well as the testimony re-born men and women, declare that there is hope for the nner.

The melancholy that pervades her work is another characristic. It would not be fair to classify George Eliot as a pessiist, but it cannot be denied that we arise from the reading of r fiction with a feeling of gloom. She shows us how every ought and desire of her characters is rich in consequences of oe. In her we find little of that joyousness of life, that cheerful ceptance of things as they are with the brave outlook into the ture, such as we find in the great poets from Chaucer to rowning. The heart of Carlyle is as deeply torn as George liot's by the pathetic spectacle of the sons of men, forever nning and forever suffering, but his vigorous masculinity is nic in its faith in God and immortality — a faith that has more cheer and refreshment than that furnished by George Eliot's stract religion of humanity.

Yet in spite of these limitations George Eliot is one of the eat novelists of English literature. Her marvellous insight into e psychology of action, her careful analysis of motives, her mor and democratic sympathy, her high seriousness, her learn-g and pathos, her magnanimity and womanliness assure her a gh place in the list of those whose fiction has made a notable ntribution to the criticism of life. That her place is not so gh today as a generation ago does not necessarily detract from e quality of her achievement.

Some sayings from the writings of George Eliot:

"Blessed is the man who, having nothing to say, refrains from calling ention to the fact."

"It's easy finding reasons why other folks should be patient."

"It's the will o' them above as a many things should be dark to us; but there's some things as I've never felt in the dark about, and they're mostly what comes i' the day's work."

"I'm not denyin' the women are foolish: God Almighty made 'em to match the men."

"Some folks tongues are like the clocks as run on strikin', not to tell you the time o' the day, but because there's summat wrong i' their own inside."

"I've never any pity for conceited people, because I think they carry their comfort about with them."

"The power of being quiet carries a man well through moments of embarrassment."

"A man's own safety is a god that sometimes makes very grim demands."

"A philosopher is the last sort of animal I should choose to resemble. I find it enough to live, without spinning lies to account for life."

"Comprehensive talkers are apt to be tiresome when we are athirst for information, but to be quite fair we must admit that superior reticence is a good deal due to the lack of matter. Speech is often barren, but silence also does not necessarily brood over a full nest. Your still fowl, blinking at you without remark, may all the while be sitting on an addled nest-egg; and when it takes to cackling, will have nothing to announce but that addled delusion."

"Among all forms of mistake, prophecy is the most gratuitous."

"The emptiness of all things, from politics to pastimes, is never so striking to us as when we fail in them."

"No soul is desolate as long as there is a human being for whom it can feel trust and reverence."

"Our deeds determine us as much as we determine our deeds."

"I couldn't live in peace if I put the shadow of a wilful sin between myself and God."

"More helpful than all wisdom is one draught of simple human pity that will not forsake us."

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CHAPTER XVIII

Carlyle

EMERSON once called Carlyle "a trip-hammer with a Æolian attachment." He certainly is one of the most mas sive, impressive, and vehement literary forces of the prolific ag in which he lived. In his sharp denunciation of the sham an hypocrisy of his times, he stands out like a fiery prophet of Israe hurling anathemas upon a sinning and perverse generation; bu along with this vehemence there is a strain of pathos an sympathy as gentle as the music of the Æolian harp. Livin from 1795 to 1881 he was contemporary with great men an epoch-making events. When Carlyle was born Burns had bu seven months remaining of an unfortunate life; Shelley wa three years old; Byron was seven; Scott and Wordsworth wer unknown young men of twenty-four and twenty-five. Franc had passed through a bloody revolution and was now beginnin her brilliant but costly career under the young Corsican. Carly was twenty when the first Napoleon met defeat at Waterloo seventy-five when the third Napoleon lost at Sedan. During th eighty-six years of his long life a great part of the economi political, and scientific life of modern Europe underwent trans formation. Science especially made immense progress; with touch as thaumaturgic as Prospero's wand she bade the forces o Nature do the will of men. But that an increase of materi comforts does not mean an increase of human worth is one o the truths insisted on again and again by Carlyle. In his rag against the sordid materialism of his age he may have bee unjust to men like Darwin, for it was easy for Carlyle to b blinded by his prejudices; in his adoration of Great Men as th inspired leaders of humanity he was unjust to the advocates of wide Democracy, but these are but limitations that stamp h humanity; above these limitations one feels the burning hatred

am and Insincerity and the holy ardor of a soul that loves
truth.

Birth and Parentage.— Thomas Carlyle was born at Eccle-
han, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, on December 4, 1795. His
rents were rugged, hard-working, thrifty, religious people.
s mother was Margaret Aitken, the second wife of James
rlyle. She was of a gentler nature than the father and was
ssionately loved by her son. Carlyle called her "a woman of,
me, the fairest descent, that of the pious, the just, and wise."
e lived long enough to see her son one of the most honored of
e sons of men. When the father died in 1832, Carlyle was
able to attend the funeral, so he passed the few days inter-
ning between the announcement of the death and the funeral in
iting *Reminiscences* of his father. This account, owing to the
cumstances under which it was written, may be an exaggerated
preciation, yet it likely gives one, on the whole, a faithful
ture of the life of this humble family, and is a beautiful and
der revelation of filial love. The critic who thinks of Carlyle
a gruff, sour, and hard-hearted cynic should read the *Rem-
scences.*

A few sentences taken from this writing will throw some
ht on the character of James Carlyle:

"Ever at every new parting of late years I have noticed him wring
hand with a tenderer pressure; as if he felt that one other of our few
etings Here was over. Mercifully also has he been spared me, till I am
er to bear his loss; till (by manifold struggles) I too, as he did, feel
feet on the Everlasting Rock. . . . I owe him much more than exist-
e. . . . It was he *exclusively* that determined on educating me, that
m his small hard-earned funds, sent me to School and College; and
de me whatever I am or may become. . . . Emphatic have I heard him
ond all men. . . . This great maxim of Philosophy he had gathered by
teaching of nature alone: That man was created to work, not to
culate, or feel, or dream. . . . He was irascible, choleric, and we all
aded his wrath. Yet passion never mastered him or maddened him;
. Man's face he did not fear; God he always feared: . . . Let me
n of him; let me 'write my Books as he built his Houses, and walk
blamelessly through this shadow-world.' . . . I know Robert Burns and
new my Father; yet were you to ask me which had the greater natural

faculty, I might perhaps actually pause before replying! . . . he w nevertheless but half-developed. We had all to complain that we *durst* freely love him. . . . My heart and my tongue played freely only with mother. . . . He was *always* GENEROUS to me in my school expens never by grudging look or word did he give me any pain. With a no faith he launched me forth into a world which himself had never be permitted to visit: let me study to act worthily of him there."

Early Education. — Carlyle was taught to read by his moth at so early an age that he could not recall the time; at five l father was teaching him arithmetic. When the mother said t boy would forget it all, the father shrewdly observed: "Not much as they that have never learned it." About five years la he told his young son — "Tom, I do not grudge thy schoolin now when thy Uncle Frank owns thee to be a better Arithmetici than himself."

In the *Reminiscences* we read:

"He took me down to Annan Academy on the Whitsunday morni 1806; I trotting at his side in the way alluded to in *Teufelsdröckh.* It w a bright morning, and to me full of moment; of fluttering boundless Hop saddened by parting with Mother, with Home; and which afterwards w cruelly disappointed. He called once or twice in the grand schoolroo as he chanced to have business at Annan: once sat down by me (as master was out) and asked whether I was all well. The boys did laugh (as I feared), perhaps durst not."

This account tallies with that in the chapter on Pedagogy *Sartor Resartus,* where we receive the impression that the scho days of Carlyle were unhappy days. In Pedagogy we read, was among strangers, harshly, at best indifferently, dispos towards me; the young heart felt, for the first time, qu orphaned and alone." He had promised his mother to absta from fighting. He obeyed so implicitly that he became the obj of much persecution. He was considered a coward. Finally could stand the ridicule no longer, turning upon the biggest bu of them all he kicked and struck in a frenzy of rage. He w beaten, but his tormentors ceased their bullyings. Later Carl spoke of the first two years in the Annan school as the m miserable of his life.

At the University.—Just before he was fourteen, Carlyle ted to the University at Edinburgh. His family had the ition of many a Scotch family—to send one at least of sons to the university, there to be educated to become a ister of the Gospel.

"One of the most tender pictures in the history of literature is that of yle as he starts for his University career. . . . It is early morning in ember at Ecclefechan—and Edinburgh with its famous University is ndred miles away. The father and mother have risen early to get mas ready—not for the cab to take him to the 'purple luxury and h repose' of the Pullman on the Limited Express. No, Tom is going valk—his only companion a boy two or three years older. These ed, poor, and godly parents had long discussed the sending of Tommy he great University. James Bell, one of the wise men of the com- ity, had said: 'Educate a boy, and he grows up to despise his ignorant nts,' but they knew that depended on the boy. 'Thou hast not done God be thanked,' said James Carlyle to his son in after years.

"But let us come back to our picture. In our mind's eye we see the ch lad starting out on his hundred-mile trip in the mist of a foggy ember morning. Almost three-score years after, Carlyle himself tifully describes the event: 'How strangely vivid, how remote and derful, tinged with the views of far-off love and sadness, is that ney to me, now after fifty-seven years of time! My mother and father ing with me in the dark frosty November morning through the village et us on our way; my dear and loving mother, her tremulous affec- ' etc."*

Carlyle, like many another man of genius, never admitted that education furnished him by the university was valuable. ile it is true that there was no great teacher to kindle the usiasm of the young Scotch boy, it is equally true that the ersity hardly deserves the condemnation that Teufelsdröckh s at his institution: "It is my painful duty to say that out of land and Spain ours was the worst of all hitherto discovered ersities." To the country boy the university with its students n all parts of Scotland, bent on a mission similar to his own; its professors of learning, if not of vital force; with its great ry waiting to be read by the hungry intellect—must have

* Chubb's *Stories of Authors.*

had a far greater influence than Carlyle was ever willing t admit. He left the university in 1814, having completed hi course without taking his degree.

Getting Under Way.—The next few years were years o experimenting. When he left the university, Carlyle still had i mind becoming a minister. Gradually this purpose weakened until that goal was an impossibility. His first work was teachin mathematics in the Annan school; his vacation was spent i studying German; next we find him in Kirkcaldy following Irvin as teacher. After two years of teaching in this place he came t the conclusion that "it were better to perish than to continu schoolmastering," and left Kirkcaldy to spend the next thre years in Edinburgh where he maintained himself by taking privat pupils, at one time studying law, and all the while endeavoring t get a start in the literary life. Owing to a dyspepsia, doubtles contracted by the privations and irregularity of his life, and t the disordered condition of his philosophy of life, these year were among his most miserable.

"I was entirely unknown in Edinburgh circles; a solitary eating m own heart, misgivings as to whether there shall be presently anything els to eat, fast losing health, a prey to numerous struggles and miseries, . . three weeks without any kind of sleep, from impossibility to be free o noise, . . . wanderings through mazes of doubt, perpetual questior unanswered, etc."

From 1820 to 1823 he contributed sixteen articles to th *Edinburgh Encyclopaedia.* These articles are not marked b special ability, but their acceptance must have greatly encourage the struggling Carlyle. About this time he had thoughts o migrating to the New World. It is probable that it was in Jun 1821, that the incident described in *Sartor Resartus* occurred

"Full of such humour, and perhaps the miserablest man in the whol French Capital or Suburbs, was I, one sultry Dog-day, after much pe ambulation, toiling along the dirty little *Rue Saint-Thomas de l'Enfe* among civic rubbish enough, in a close atmosphere, and over pavemen hot as Nebuchadnezzar's Furnace, . . . when all at once there rose Thought in me, and I asked myself: 'What *art* thou afraid of? Wher

-e, like a coward, dost thou forever pip and whimper, and go cowering d trembling? Despicable biped! what is the sum-total of the worst t lies before thee? Death? Well, Death; and say the pangs of phet too, and all that the Devil and Man may, will, or can do against e! Hast thou not a heart?"

This passage is often quoted as indicative of the great spiritual ansformation in the life of the despondent Carlyle. It is the ice of one who has determined to close his Byron, and open his oethe. That Goethe helped him greatly in the conquering of his ubts and skepticisms he acknowledged in a letter to the great erman in 1824:

"Four years ago when I read your *Faust* among the mountains of y native Scotland, I could not but fancy I might one day see you, and ur out before you as before a father, the woes and wanderings of a art whose mysteries you so thoroughly seemed to comprehend, and could beautifully represent."

April, 1827, he wrote his second letter to Goethe. In this tter his gratitude is even more openly expressed:

"For if I have been delivered from darkness into any measure of ht, if I know aught of myself and my duties and destination, it is to e study of your writings more than to any other circumstance that I ve this; it is you more than any other man that I should thank and verence with the feeling of a disciple to his master, nay, of a son to iritual father. This is no idle compliment, but a heartfelt truth."

Carlyle's next literary work is the *Life of Schiller,* which, rst appearing in a magazine in 1823-24, was published in book rm in 1825. His translation of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprentice-ip* was published in Edinburgh in 1824. The revenue from ese two productions together with his income as tutor to the ys of the Buller family, a position secured for him by the kind fices of his friend Irving, enabled him to assist his brother lick to a farm and to help his brother John through the Uni-rsity. "What any brethren of our father's house possess," said omas with generous spirit, "I look on as a common stock om which all are entitled to draw." Carlyle's generosity to

his family is a pleasant contrast to his tendency to querulousness and his forgetfulness of benefits received.

Marriage.—On October 17, 1826, Carlyle married Jane Baillie Welsh, a woman of brilliant wit and of family connections usually spoken of as socially much superior to those of her husband. However, Carlyle's parents are not to be considered as peasants of the type found in some of the Continental countries. His father was a stone mason and a tenant farmer; the son had received a university education and had already won some slight reputation as a writer at the time of the marriage. To consider, as Froude sometimes intimates, that Jane Welsh lost social prestige by marrying Carlyle is erroneous. Her father was a successful country doctor who adored his bright daughter and tried to give her the best education within his means. However, successful as he was, he was not rich, and to imagine Jane as brought up in luxurious surroundings which unfitted her to become the wife of a poor literary man is wide of the mark.

Their married life has been laid bare to a curious public which has indulged in a long and profitless controversy as to their matrimonial happiness and unhappiness. We have not a scrap of evidence, for which one is thankful, to base an opinion whether Shakspere's married life was happy or unhappy, and yet there has been used much good ink on both sides of the question. We have a half-dozen volumes of the letters of Thomas and Jane Carlyle, and there is still some uncertainty as to whether they lived happily together. Jane Welsh was a woman of keen wit and a ready tongue; like Beatrice she could speak poniards and make every word stab. Froude describes her as a woman faithful to death, but "hard as flint"; and Carlyle himself said that "She had, when she was angry, a tongue like a cat's which would take the skin off at a touch." She was also of a highly nervous temperament, and suffered much during a large part of her life. On the other hand, Carlyle was a man of strong individuality; given to complaining about petty evils; irritable, and of that persistence which is akin to selfishness.

During the many years of their married life Mrs. Carlyle saw

r husband emerge from obscurity into the fierce light that beats on a throne of literary eminence, but she was not happy. "I arried for ambition. Carlyle has exceeded all that my wildest pes ever imagined for him, *and I am miserable.*" Such a statement must be taken with a grain of allowance. This was the aculation of a temporary mood. A full acquaintance with all e letters compels the belief that the married life of the Carlyles d many days and years of happiness and of helpfulness. That ey loved each other we can gather from the published letters hich reveal a world of deep affection; that after her death he ided himself in passionate regret is characteristic of a man of s sensibility. The many warm friends of Carlyle think that roude has given a distorted and wholly erroneous impression of e married life of the Carlyles. One of the best defenses is that Sir James Crichton-Browne as an introduction to the two lumes of the *New Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh rlyle.*

Even Froude with all his erroneous deductions cannot avoid ying,

> "Though the lives of the Carlyles were not happy, yet if we look at em from the beginning to the end they were grandly beautiful. Neither them under other conditions would have risen to as high an excellence in fact they each achieved; and the main question is not how happy n and women have been in this world, but what they have made of mselves."

Craigenputtock.—For a year and a half after their marriage e Carlyles lived at Comely* Bank, Edinburgh. While here rlyle contributed articles on German literature to such magaes as the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Foreign Review.* One the pleasantest episodes in their life while at Comely Bank was e reception of a letter from the great Goethe, acknowledging rlyle's *Life of Schiller.* Along with the letter were presents of oks for both Carlyle and his wife. That the life at Comely nk was a pleasant one can be inferred from letters such as s one from Mrs. Carlyle to her mother-in-law:

* Carlyle uniformly spelled it *Comley.*

"And we are really very happy; and when he falls upon some work, we shall be still happier. Indeed I should be very stupid or very thankless, if I did not congratulate myself every hour of the day on the lot which it has pleased Providence to assign me. My Husband is so kind! so, in all respects, after my own heart! I was sick one day and he nursed me as well as my mother could have done, and he never says a hard word to me — *unless* I richly deserve it. We see great numbers of people here, but are always most content alone."

And in a later letter she writes:

"Indeed we live a most quiet and even happy life here. . . . *Alone* we never weary. If I have not Jean's enviable gift of *talking,* I am at least among the best listeners in the Kingdom. And my Husband has always something interesting and instructive to say."

In May, 1828, we find the Carlyles at Craigenputtock, the "Hill of the Hawks," an estate of 800 acres, the patrimony of Mrs. Carlyle. Carlyle, however, generously insisted that the income from the rents should go to Jane's mother. The move from Edinburgh to Craigenputtock was doubtless made in the interest of economy. One gets the impression from Froude that Craigenputtock was a desolate place, "the dreariest spot in all the British Dominions," and that for six years while there Mrs. Carlyle was unhappy because of her loneliness and the drudgery she was obliged to undergo. Carlyle's reputation has suffered because of the prejudice Froude has aroused by emphasizing the adverse conditions under which this couple lived at Craigenputtock. The fact seems to be that Mrs. Carlyle was an industrious housekeeper, but that the drudgery was usually done by a servant. Carlyle's own comment, when in after years he hit upon a letter of hers in which she referred to milking, is:

"That of milking with her own little hand, I think, could never have been *necessary* (plenty of milkmaids within call), and I conclude must have had a spirit of frolic or adventure in it, for which she had abundant spirit."

And in June, 1832, Mrs. Carlyle gives us another pleasant picture in a letter to a friend:

"For my part, I am very content. I have everything here my heart esires, that I could have anywhere else, except society, and even that eprivation is not to be considered an evil. . . . If the knocker make no ound for weeks together, it is so much the better for my nerves. My lusband is as good company as reasonable mortal could desire. Every air morning we ride on horseback for an hour before breakfast. . . . 'hen we eat such a surprising breakfast of home-baked bread, and eggs, tc., etc. . . . Then Carlyle takes to his writing, while I, like Eve, 'studious f household good,' inspect my house, my garden, my live stock, gather lowers for my drawing-room, and lapfuls of eggs, and finally betake nyself also to writing, or reading, or making or mending, or whatever vork seems fittest. After dinner, and only then, I lie on the sofa and to my shame be it spoken) sometimes *sleep*, but oftenest dream waking."

These extracts have been given to show that Jane Welsh Carlyle's ife at Craigenputtock was not that of a common drudge.

It was during their life at Craigenputtock that Emerson made is first call upon them. In his *English Traits* Emerson has given is his account of the visit:

"From Edinburgh I went to the Highlands. On my return I came rom Glasgow to Dumfries, and being intent on delivering a letter which had brought from Rome, inquired for Craigenputtock. It was a farm n Nithsdale, in the parish of Dunscore, sixteen miles distant. No public oach passed near it, so I took a private carriage from the inn. I found the ouse amid desolate heathery hills, where the lonely scholar nourished his nighty heart. Carlyle was a man from his youth, an author who did not eed to hide from his readers, and as absolute a man of the world, nknown and exiled on that hill-farm, as if holding on his own terms vhat is best in London. He was tall and gaunt, with a cliff-like brow, elf-possessed and holding his extraordinary powers of conversation in asy command; clinging to his northern accent with evident relish; full f lively anecdote, and with a streaming humor which floated every thing e looked upon. . . . We went out to walk over long hills, and looked at Criffel, then without his cap, and down into Wordsworth's country. There ve sat down and talked of the immortality of the soul. It was not Carlyle's fault that he talked of that topic, for he had the natural dis- nclination of every nimble spirit to bruise itself against walls, and did ot like to place himself where no step can be taken. But he was honest nd true, and cognizant of the subtile links that bind ages together, and aw how every event affects all the future. 'Christ died on the tree; that uilt Dunscore kirk yonder; that brought you and me together. Time has nly a relative existence.'"

It was while at Craigenputtock that he wrote *Sartor Resartus,* a work which while not a monument of industry and scholarship like his great histories, is the most popular of all his work, and richly deserves the comment of his wife upon her first reading, "It is a work of genius, dear."

In London. — Feeling that it might be better for him to come into closer contact with the world of men, also that he might find a readier sale for his writings if he were in the publishing center, London, the literary as well as commercial center of the English-speaking world, Carlyle moved to 5 Cheyne Row, a side street off the Thames, in the district called Chelsea. The house, now numbered 24, has been purchased by the public and is used as a memorial.

Carlyle and his wife entered their new home, a rented house, in 1834, and there they remained until the end of their days, Carlyle, who survived his wife by fifteen years, making it his home for forty-seven years. Their choice of a home was a good one, for they were removed from the bustling center of busy London, and yet were in easy reach. In their neighborhood were men of literary distinction, their nearest neighbors of this class being the genial and improvident Hunts. During the many years of his residence at Chelsea Carlyle made many trips to Scotland, especially while his mother lived; he visited Ireland twice, went to France, to Belgium, and twice to Germany. He was also a visitor at the commodious country homes of aristocratic friends, especially at the home of the Ashburtons, where he was admired by Lady Ashburton, a brilliant and charming woman.

The remaining years of Carlyle's life were quiet and uneventful, marked by a gradually widening influence and by those honors which come to the eminently successful in literature. With Mr. Nichol, one of his biographers, we may divide the years in London into four periods:

1. 1834-1842. During these years appeared the *French Revolution, Heroes and Hero-Worship, Lectures,* and *Chartism.* Their long struggle with poverty was relieved at this time by the death of Mrs. Welsh and the growing sale of Carlyle's writings.

2. 1842-1853. During this decade appeared the *Life and Letters of Cromwell, Past and Present, Latter-Day Pamphlets,* and the *Life of Sterling.* In 1853, his mother, whom he passionately loved, died.

3. 1853-1866. During this period he wrote the *History of Friedrich II.* In 1866, just after his well-received address as Lord Rector of the University at Edinburgh, at a time when his fame was at the flood, his wife died suddenly of heart failure, while out driving in Hyde Park.

4. 1866-1881. The last fifteen years of his life were spent mainly in reading and editing his wife's letters, and in expressing passionate regret that he had not idolized her while she was living. The defenders of Carlyle insist that his remorse, a word that Carlyle uses with varying shades of meaning, was the regret of a super-sensitive man; that the only definite act of cruelty that he could remember was that on one occasion when they were driving he had refused to get out of the carriage to shake hands with her dressmaker.

As a Lecturer. — When Carlyle moved from Craigenputtock to London he had about £200 as a buffer against starvation — that and an indomitable will, great industry, and considerable ability to produce literature. But literature seldom rewards its devotees with "Dame Fortune's golden smile." Emerson, most practical of Carlyle's friends, had urged him to come to America, where his fame was greater than in England, to give a series of lectures, and Carlyle for years had a vague intention of going. Then in 1837 some of his English friends, among whom were Harriet Martineau, Henry Taylor, and Spedding, prepared the way for a successful course in London. Carlyle dreaded the ordeal of public speaking, but bold poverty drove him to it. On April 4 Spedding writes to Monckton Milnes, "Carlyle lectures on German literature next month. . . . I want you to come up a little before they begin that you may assist in producing the attendance of others." Carlyle was preeminently fitted to speak on German literature, no Englishman then knowing half as much on that subject. Goethe had said to Eckermann in 1828 that

Carlyle was "almost more at home in our literature than we ourselves."

The first lecture was given on May 1, the same day on which Browning's *Strafford* was produced for the first time by Macready. The lectures were six in number, and after all expenses were paid there was left a profit of £135. In a postscript to one of her husband's letters Mrs. Carlyle shows that the lectures were profitable in other desirable ways, "Nothing he has done seems to have carried such conviction to the public heart that he is a real man of genius and worth being kept alive at a moderate rate."

The next year a course of twelve lectures on the "History of Literature" was given, after a more careful special preparation. The lectures were well attended by fashionable London. Monckton Milnes writes to a friend, "He talks as graphically as his *French Revolution;* his personality is most attractive." Carlyle's harvest from this series was nearly 300 guineas. "The London season and the cosmic program for 1838 included, as two of their chief events," writes Professor MacMechan, "the coronation of the girl queen of nineteen, and the lectures of Thomas Carlyle."

In 1839, although no longer pressed by poverty to overcome his repugnance to lecturing, he gave a course of six lectures on subjects relating to Protestantism, Puritanism, and the French Revolution, the general title being, "The Revolutions of Modern Europe." His income from the six lectures was nearly £200. He wrote to his brother John:

"My audience was visibly more numerous than ever, and of more distinguished people; my sorrow in delivery was less; my remorse after delivery was much greater. [His use of the word *remorse* should be noted, in view of the light it throws on some of his similar expressions after the death of his wife.] I gave one very bad lecture. . . . It was on the French Revolution. I was dispirited; in miserable health. . . . In short, I felt, after it was all over, like a man who had been robbing hen-roosts. In which circumstances, I, the day before my finale, hired a swift horse, galloped out to Harrow like a Faust's flight through an ocean of green, went in a kind of rage to the room the next day, and made on

nsculottism itself very considerably the nearest approach to a good cture they ever got of me, carried the whole business glowing before me, d ended half an hour beyond my time, with universal decisive applause fficient for the occasion."

The book *Heroes and Hero-Worship* appeared in the early art of 1841 in an edition of 1000 copies. In May Fraser, the ublisher, paid Carlyle £150 for the *Heroes and Hero-Worship* nd *Sartor Resartus*. By this time Carlyle had become so popu- r that an American publisher had published a pirated edition efore Emerson could arrange for an edition which would yield me profit to the author. Hereafter, Carlyle was to send Emer- on the manuscript of any work he intended to publish so that racy could be anticipated and made less profitable. Before the ook appeared the matter had been given to the public in six ctures. The heroes selected are, *a,* Odin; *b,* Mahomet; *c,* ante and Shakspere; *d,* Luther and Knox; *e,* Johnson, Rousseau, nd Burns; *f,* Cromwell and Napoleon. Since its first appear- nce the book has had a wide and continuous popularity, yet com- ared with his masterpieces it is a flimsy production. One dare ot always accept Carlyle's own verdict upon his work, for he as as unjust to his own work, at times, as he was to that of his ntemporaries. But it is interesting to read his own comment n *Heroes* — "Nothing which I have ever done pleases me so ill. hey have nothing new, nothing that to me is not *old*. The style them requires to be low-pitched, as like talk as possible."

Political Belief. — Matthew Arnold has told us that Emerson as no philosopher because he had no system of philosophy; of arlyle we may say the same thing, for he never elaborated a stem of belief, he "relies on nobility of feeling rather than on ntinuity of thought." Yet it would be very misleading to ink that Carlyle had no fixed and definite ideas. One of his ost determined and oft-repeated doctrines is that in regard to e inability of the masses to govern themselves. By birth and aining Carlyle should have been a loud-voiced tribune of the ople, but he had no illusions as to the virtue of the mob; his usions were of another kind. He was a warm-hearted, pas-

sionate thinker who looked with a great love upon the suffering of humanity, but while he was a Radical in his sympathies, h was a Tory of the Tories in his thinking. He had no confidenc in what his friend Mazzini called the "collective wisdom" of th people. His political doctrine may be epitomized in these words "Find the right man, and follow him." Or as Saintsbury puts i

"Don't care one rap, or the ten-thousandth part of one rap, for th majority. You may be — you very likely are — a fool yourself, but it as nearly as possible certain that the majority of the majority are fool and therefore, though you need not necessarily set yourself above them you are absolutely justified in neglecting them."

Such doctrine is, of course, far removed from the popula democracy of modern times. Knowing his views on democracy one is not surprised to find that Carlyle was a defender of Amer ican slavery and an opponent of the "rights of woman," and scorner of the idea that woman should have the suffrage. Hi teaching that *might is right* seems crude and primitive, and ca be defended only by his extension of the meaning of "might until it includes moral as well as intellectual and physical migh "By right divine the strong and capable govern the weak an foolish. . . . Strength, we say, is Justice itself."

Carlyle, like his greatest disciple Ruskin, preached continuall that a people's greatness does not depend on its material growt in territory, machinery, material wealth, and comfort. Righteou ness alone exalteth a nation. He ridiculed the cant abou Progress and Prosperity. Progress — whither? Prosperity — i what? he asks. What a nation needs is not a deep-seated hunge after stocks and bonds, imports and exports, but after Justic and Righteousness. His histories were to teach that God is sti in the world and that his moral laws were as inexorable as in th days of Moses when the law was promulgated from Mt. Sina

"You shall reverence your Almighty Maker. You shall speak trut You shall do justice to your fellow-men. If you set truth aside f conventional and convenient lies; if you prefer your own pleasure, yo own will, your own ambition, to purity and manliness and justice, a submission to your Maker's commands, then are whirlwinds still provid

he constitution of things which will blow you to atoms. Philistines, yrians, Babylonians were the whips which were provided for the elites. Germans and Huns swept away the Roman sensualists. Modern iety, though out of fear of barbarian conquerors, breeds in its own rt the instruments of its punishment." *

Style. — Emerson's clever characterization of his own style, a letter to Carlyle in 1838, as consisting of "paragraphs incomssible, each sentence an infinitely repellent particle," does not ply to Carlyle's, although with Emerson he violates the traditns of the classic school of Addison and Swift. Neither writer n be taken by the rhetorician as a model of coherence and arness. They are great writers, their style is the expression strong individuality, but they are not to be imitated. Some tics have taken Carlyle's whimsical outburst upon the style of ufelsdröckh as an accurate description of his own English:

"On the whole Professor Teufelsdröckh is not a cultivated writer. his sentences, perhaps not more than nine-tenths stand straight on their s; the remainder are in quite singular attitude, buttressed-up by props parentheses and dashes), and even with this or that rag-tag hanging m them; a few even sprawl-out helplessly on all sides, quite brokenked and dismembered."

forming an opinion of his style as revealed in *Sartor Resartus* e must remember that he purposely Germanized his English in ler to carry out the hoax of translating the work of a Gern philosopher. However, his *French Revolution, Cromwell, ederick,* are also stamped by a style called Carlylese. For this us be thankful, for Carlyle without his distinctive style would as tame as Falstaff without his wit and as uninteresting as *mlet* without Hamlet. Taine, who as a Frenchman naturally es order and clearness and coherence, has written of Carlyle's le as vigorously as Carlyle himself might have written:

"He leaps in unimpeded jerks from one end of the field of ideas to other; he confounds all styles, jumbles all forms, heaps together pagan ions, Bible reminiscences, German abstractions, technical terms, poetry, g, mathematics, physiology, archaic words, neologies. There is nothing

* Froude.

he does not tread down and ravage. The symmetrical constructions o human art and thought, dispersed and upset, are piled under his hand into a vast mass of shapeless ruins, from the top of which he gesticulate and fights, like a conquering savage."

Carlyle's style is the outgrowth of his experience; in his case as in all instances of genuine originality of expression, the style is the man. His father was a man of vivid and forceful speech the youthful Thomas when living with the sturdy Scotch o Dumfries heard much talk that was more picturesque tha elegant. That he could write precise and conventional Englis we know from many of his letters and from some of his essay and books, but we know equally well from many of his letter that his vivid and picturesque style was a natural mode o expression. His friends have testified that he talked as he wrot He was a great and fluent conversationalist, which may explai why his sentences on the printed page make their appeal to th ear; he was a wide reader with a tenacious memory, that explain his richness of allusion; he loved to look at a fact, whic explains his picturesqueness. Saintsbury's characterization o his style shows a more sympathetic appreciation than Taine's

"I should be very sorry to see it generally imitated, and thoug sometimes it was very nearly bad, it was at its best surpassed by no sty for pure force and intense effect — full of lights and colors, now as fier as those of fire, now as tender as those of fire also — full of voic covering the whole gamut from storm to whisper."

Personal Characteristics.— The common notion that Carly was a dyspeptic grumbler has some basis of fact; he was dy peptic and he did grumble. But fallacy lurks in "commo notions," for they are usually but half-truths. Carlyle really ha the biggest and kindest of hearts, the tenderest of sympathie His gruffness was the husk needed to guard his sensibilitie While sunny is not exactly the adjective to describe him — h was too terribly in earnest for that — he had great capacity fo enjoyment. Dr. Gordon, a familiar friend, has said that he w "the pleasantest and heartiest fellow in the world, and mo excellent company."

He was the soul of generosity. In the earlier days of his erty and obscurity he was always ready to share all he had h the needy members of his family; and in his days of pros- ity he gave half of his substance to the needy.

"If he could do a friendly act to any human being [says Crichton- wne], he did it, and care and personal exertion were not wanting. olerant of sentimentality, he was himself a deep well of sentiment efiled."

ing and sarcastic as he was in passing judgments on his con- nporaries, he never was malicious:

"In the long years that I was intimate with him [writes the brilliant much criticized biographer, Froude] I never heard him tell a malicious y or say a malicious word of any human being."

Refusing to become a preacher in an orthodox church, he become a world-wide preacher proclaiming the eternal Gospel Faith and Work. In his youth dismayed and bewildered he ndered about in the Bogs of Disbelief, but he soon set his t on the firm rock of Faith.

"The agnostic doctrines [said he to Froude] were to all appearances the finest flour, from which you might expect the most excellent bread, when you came to feed on it you found it was powdered glass and you been eating the deadliest poison."

d to his good old mother, who had had some misgivings as to at his writings meant, he wrote,

"I, in spite of all my dyspepsias and nervousness and hypochondrias, still bent on being a very meritorious sort of character, . . . useful I e, whithersoever I go, in the good old cause, for which I beg you to eve that I cordially agree with you in feeling my chief interest, ever we may differ in our mode of expressing it."

He was not perfect; but his biographer need not apologize the character of Thomas Carlyle. He was intolerant; he no appreciation of the world of art and music; he never lerstood the work of men like Darwin; he misjudged democ- y and upheld slavery; he seldom placed the proper evaluation

on the work of his contemporaries — yet what a grand figur he is!

John Tyndall, who with Lecky and Froude were the onl ones of his London friends who had journeyed up to the Main hill home at Ecclefechan, where the mortal remains were lai to rest, to rest by the side of his humble parents, instead of i Westminster Abbey where Dean Stanley had offered a place wrote:

"In Switzerland I live in the immediate presence of a mountain, nobl alike in form and mass. A bucket or two of water, whipped into a clou can obscure, if not efface that lofty peak. You would almost say that n peak could be there. But the cloud passes away, and the mountain in it solid grandeur remains. Thus, when all temporary dust is laid, will stan out, erect and clear, the massive figure of Carlyle."

Sartor Resartus. — *Sartor Resartus,* or the Tailor Retailored purports to be the meditations of an original German professo upon the philosophy of clothes. It is hard to realize now tha the British public, as well as some of the critics, were deceive by Carlyle's palpable subterfuge. The central idea is that a clothes cover the body, as the body covers the spirit, so the visibl world is but the covering of the invisible spirit of things. Thi is no new thought, and, as has been pointed out, Carlyle wa familiar with the expression of the idea by Swift in his *Tale of Tub,* but Carlyle's treatment is altogether original.

The book is divided into three parts, the first relating to th discovery of a German work on clothes by Diogenes Teufels dröckh, a work which Carlyle is going to edit; there are also man digressions and philosophical observations. The second part i biographical, relating to the life of Teufelsdröckh under suc chapters as Genesis, Idyllic, Pedagogy, and Romance. In th three famous chapters, The Everlasting No, Center of Indiffer ence, and The Everlasting Yea, we have an account of th spiritual progress of the hero from the dark night of despair t the light of hope. The third book indulges in half-philosophica half-poetical reflections upon such topics as symbols, and natura supernaturalism.

Carlyle himself has said that Sartor is "symbolical myth all," : he does admit that the episode related in the Everlasting No the Rue St. Thomas de l'Enfer (in fact, Leith Walk) is ıgraphical. He should have admitted more, for an intense iter like Carlyle cannot escape self-revelation. This does not ean that *Sartor Resartus* is a biography of Carlyle, but it es mean that many incidents in his own life suggested incidents the life of Teufelsdröckh and that the spiritual life, the feelings d thoughts of the German professor are the thoughts and elings of Carlyle.

In spite of the brilliancy of his work, or perhaps because it, for the public seldom accepts the unconventional, *Sartor sartus* had a hard time to find the light of day. Its strange- ss of language, its boldness of thought repelled the wary pub- her. It is easy now for the critic to praise its idealism, its vidness, its poetic rhapsodies, its picturesque style—"every ıtence alive to the finger-tips"—but then both the British blisher and the British public ignored it. Fraser, who finally blished it in his magazine, first offered to publish it in book rm if Carlyle would give him £150. In book form it first peared in America where his genius, as in the case of Brown- , first received enthusiastic recognition. The present popu- ity of *Sartor Resartus* is attested by the fact that recently in a gle year nine separate editions appeared.

The following passages will give some idea of the style and ilosophy in *Sartor Resartus:*

"To the eye of vulgar logic, says he [Teufelsdröckh], what is man? omnivorous Biped that wears Breeches. To the eye of Pure Reason, at is he? A Soul, and Spirit, and divine Apparition. Round his sterious Me, there lies, under all those wool-rags, a Garment of Flesh of Senses), contextured in the Loom of Heaven; whereby he is ealed to his like, and dwells with them in UNION and DIVISION; and sees l fashions for himself a Universe, with azure Starry Spaces, and long ousands of Years."

A passage that expresses his contempt for poor teaching and ideal of real teaching is found in the chapter on Pedagogy:

"My teachers, says he [Teufelsdröckh], were hide-bound Pedant without knowledge of man's nature or of boy's; or of aught save thei lexicons and quarterly account-books. . . . How can an inanimate, mechan ical Gerund-grinder, the like of whom will, in a subsequent century, b manufactured at Nürnberg out of wood and leather, foster the growth o anything; much more of Mind, which grows, not like a vegetable, b having its roots littered with etymological compost, but like a Spirit, b mysterious contact of Spirit; Thought kindling itself at the fire of livin Thought? How shall *he* give kindling, in whose own inward man there no live coal, but all is burnt out to a dead grammatical cinder?"

Here is an expression of his deep tenderness:

"Poor, wandering, wayward man. Art thou not tried, and beate with stripes, even as I am? Ever, whether thou bear the royal mantle o the beggar's gabardine, art thou so weary, so heavy-laden; and thy Be of Rest is but a Grave. O my Brother, my Brother, why can I not shelte thee in my bosom, and wipe away all tears from thy eyes!"

The most familiar of all sayings is this, "Produce! Produce Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Produc produce it, in God's name!"

The French Revolution.—On the 12th of January, 183 Carlyle finished the *French Revolution.* To his wife h remarked, "I can tell the world you have not had for a hundre years any book that comes more direct and flamingly from th heart of a loving man." Carlyle did not throw off his books in light and genial mood; the *French Revolution* saw the light o publicity after struggles and heart-burnings. The public familiar with the story of how the manuscript of the first volum had been loaned to J. S. Mill, who was deeply interested in th work, having at one time contemplated writing a history him self, and upon abandoning the idea had generously loaned Carly all the books he had collected on the subject. Through an acc dent the manuscript was burned by a careless servant who mi took the papers for rubbish. Mill, chagrined and sorrowfu spent two hours in apologizing to the household at No. 5 Cheyn Row. When he had left the only comment of this "roarin Thor," this petulant complainer and irascible grumbler, for suc is the popular impression, was this, "Well, Mill, poor fellow,

ribly cut up; we must endeavor to hide from him how very ious this business is to us." Mill insisted on Carlyle's taking)0 as part compensation for the loss; Carlyle refused to take it, t finally accepted £100, as he was in great need of money at e time.

To many the *French Revolution* is the most brilliant product Carlyle's genius; it is not a history in the usual sense, but ther a prose-poem dealing with an event considered by some e most significant since the birth of Christ. It presupposes owledge of the Revolution, so that unless the reader is familiar th the French Revolution it is advisable to read a brief history that subject before reading Carlyle's work. It is a work to be ad in its entirety rather than in extracts, for it is only by thering the cumulative effect of its 900 pages that one's spirit n feel the force of this book from the flaming "heart of a ving man."

"The book [writes Leslie Stephen] shows a unique combination; on e one hand is the singularly shrewd insight into character and the vivid alization of the picturesque; on the other, is the 'mysticism' or poetical ilosophy which relieves the events against a background of mystery. ie contrast is marked by the humor which seems to combine a cynical ew of human folly with a deeply pathetic sense of the sadness and ffering of life."

The following extract from the chapter on Charlotte Corday in e *French Revolution* is a good illustration of his style, his art, id his broad sympathy:

"About eight on the Saturday morning, she purchased a large sheath-ife in the Palais Royal; then straightway, in the Place des Victoires, kes a hackney-coach: 'To the Rue de l'École de Médicine, No. 44.' It is e residence of the Citoyen Marat! — The Citoyen Marat is ill, and nnot be seen; which seems to disappoint her much. Her business is ith Marat, then? Hapless, beautiful Charlotte; hapless, squalid Marat! rom Caen in the utmost West, from Neuchâtel in the utmost East, they vo are drawing nigh each other; they two have, very strangely, business gether. — Charlotte, returning to her Inn, despatches a short Note to Iarat; signifying that she is from Caen, the seat of rebellion; that she esires earnestly to see him, and 'will put it in his power to do France

a great service.' No answer. Charlotte writes another Note, still mor pressing; sets out with it by coach, about seven in the evening, herself Tired day-laborers have again finished their week; huge Paris is circlin and simmering, manifold, according to its vague wont: this one fai Figure has decision in it; drives straight — towards a purpose.

"It is yellow July evening, we say, the thirteenth of the month; ev of the Bastille day — when 'M. Marat,' four years ago, in the crowd o the Pont Neuf, shrewdly required of that Benseval Hussar-party, whic had such friendly dispositions, 'to dismount and give up their arms, then; and became notable among Patriot men. Four years: what a road h has traveled; — and sits now, about half-past seven of the clock, stewin in slipper-bath; sore afflicted; ill of Revolution Fever — of what othe malady this History had rather not name. Excessively sick and worn poor man: with precisely eleven-pence half-penny of ready money, i paper; with slipper-bath; strong three-footed stool for writing on, th while; and a squalid — Washerwoman, one may call her: that is his civi establishment in Medical-School Street; thither and not else-whither ha his road led him. Not to the reign of Brotherhood and Perfect Felicity yet surely on his way towards that? Hark, a rap again! A musica woman's-voice, refusing to be rejected; it is the Citoyenne who would d France a service. Marat, recognizing from within, cries, Admit her Charlotte Corday is admitted.

"Citoyen Marat, I am from Caen, the seat of rebellion, and wishe to speak with you. — Be seated, *mon enfant.* Now what are the traitor doing at Caen? What Deputies are at Caen? — Charlotte names som Deputies. 'Their heads shall fall within a fortnight,' croaks the eage People's-Friend, clutching his tablets to write: *Barbaroux, Petion,* write he with bare-shrunk arm, turning aside in the bath: *Petion,* and *Louve* and — Charlotte has drawn her knife from the sheath; plunges it, wit one sure stroke, into the writer's heart. *'A moi, chère amie,* Help, dear! no more could the Death-choked say or shriek. The helpful Washer woman running in, there is no Friend of the people, or Friend of th Washerwoman left; but his life with a groan gushes out, indignant, to th shades below.

"And so Marat People's-Friend is ended; the lone Stylites has go hurled down suddenly from his Pillar — *whitherward,* He that made hi knows. Patriot Paris may sound triple and tenfold, in dole and wail; re-echoed by Patriot France; and the Convention . . . and Jacobin Socie ties, in lamentable oratory, summing up his character, parallel him to One whom we think it honor to call 'the Good Sansculotte' — whom we nam not here; also a Chapel may be made, for the urn that holds his Heart in the Place du Carrousel; and new-born children be named Marat. . . One sole circumstance we read with clear sympathy, in the old *Moniteu*

Newspaper: how Marat's Brother comes from Neuchâtel to ask of the Convention, 'that the deceased Jean-Paul Marat's musket be given him.' For Marat too had a Brother, and natural affections; and was wrapt once in swaddling-clothes, and slept safe in a cradle like the rest of us. Ye children of men! . . .

"As for Charlotte Corday, her work is accomplished; the recompense of it is near and sure. The *chère amie,* and neighbors of the house, flying at her, she 'overturns some moveables,' entrenches herself till the gendarmes arrive; then quietly surrenders; goes quietly to the Abbaye Prison; she alone quiet, all Paris sounding, in wonder, in rage or admiration, round her. . . .

"On Wednesday morning, the thronged Palais de Justice and Revolutionary Tribunal can see her face; beautiful and calm: she dates it 'fourth day of the Preparation of Peace.' A strange murmur ran through the Hall, at sight of her; you could not say of what character. Tinville has his indictment and tape-papers: the Cutler of the Palais Royal will testify that he sold her the sheath-knife; 'all these details are needless,' interrupted Charlotte; 'it is I that killed Marat.' By whose instigation? — 'By no one's.' What tempted you then? His crimes. 'I killed one man,' added she, raising her voice extremely (*extrêmement*), as they went on with their questions, 'I killed one man to save a hundred thousand; a villain to save innocents; a savage wild-beast, to give repose to my country. I was a Republican before the Revolution; I never wanted energy.' There is therefore nothing to be said. The public gazes astonished; the hasty limners sketch her features, Charlotte not disapproving; the men of law proceed with their formalities. The doom is Death as a murderess. To her Advocate she gives thanks; in gentle phrase, in high-flown classical spirit. To the Priest they send her she gives thanks; but needs not any shriving, any ghostly or other aid from him.

"On this same evening, therefore, about half-past seven o'clock, from the gate of the Conciergerie, to a City all on tiptoe, the fatal Cart issues: seated on it a fair young creature, sheeted in red smock of Murderess; so beautiful, serene, so full of life; journeying towards death,— alone amid the World. Many take off their hats, saluting reverently; for what heart but must be touched? Others growl and howl. Adam Lux, of Mentz, declares that she is greater than Brutus; that it were beautiful to die with her: the head of this young man seems turned. At the Place de la Revolution, the countenance of Charlotte wears the same still smile. The executioners proceed to bind her feet; she resists, thinking it meant as an insult; on a word of explanation, she submits with cheerful apology. As the last act, all being now ready, they take the neckerchief from her neck; a blush of maidenly shame overspreads that fair face and neck; the cheeks were still tinged with it, when the executioner lifted the

severed head, to show it to the people. "It is most true," says Forster, "that he struck the cheek insultingly; for I saw with my eyes: the Police imprisoned him for it."

In this manner have the Beautifullest and Squalidest come in collision, and extinguished one another. Jean-Paul Marat and Marie-Ann Charlotte Corday both, suddenly, are no more. "Day of the Preparation of Peace?" Alas, how were peace possible. . . . . O ye hapless Two, mutually extinctive, the Beautiful and the Squalid, sleep ye well,—in the mother's bosom that bore you both!

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CHAPTER XIX

Ruskin

AMONG the masters of English literature John Ruskin is one of the rarest, most beautiful, and saddest of souls. There are critics who think that in some respects his influence is like that of a "dim comet wagging its useless tail of phosphorescent nothing across the steadfast stars." But there are many who feel that Ruskin was an inspired prophet with the voice of an angel and the heart of the Son of Man, belonging to the few of whom it may be written,

> "Through such souls alone
> God stooping shows sufficient of His light
> For us i' the dark to rise by."

Birth and Parentage. — On February 8, 1819, the year of the birth of Kingsley, Clough, Lowell, and Whitman, John Ruskin was born in London. The house, now marked by a small memorial tablet, is a plain brick edifice of three and a half stories, No. 54 Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, Bloomsbury. The father, John James Ruskin, a London sherry merchant of the wholesale firm of Ruskin, Telford, and Domecq, had been born and bred in Edinburgh. He was a thrifty Scotchman who prospered so well that he left a fortune of nearly £200,000. He was so conscientious that he had delayed his marriage for years, because he first insisted on paying off the debts of a father who had not possessed his son's business ability. The inscription on his tomb, written by his famous son, declares he was "an entirely honest merchant," but he was more than that. He was a man of culture, a lover of art and literature, and a devoted and sympathetic father. The mother, a first cousin of her husband, was a woman of decided individuality, with a stern philosophy of life, and of so absorbing an affection for her son, her only child, that her conduct suggests Tennyson's line in *Gareth and Lynette*.

"Good mother is bad mother unto me."

And yet it is not to be inferred that she was over-indulgent. She was a strict Sabbatarian, a most orderly housekeeper, a strict disciplinarian. When Ruskin tells us that he has seen his mother traveling all a summer's day from sunrise to sunset without ever leaning back in the carriage, we have an illuminating light on her character. When she died in 1871, aged ninety, her son inscribed on the east side of the granite slab erected in honor of his parents:

"Nor was dearer earth ever returned to earth, nor purer life recorded in Heaven."

Early Education. — In *Praeterita,* that most charming though incomplete autobiography, we have Ruskin's own story of his education. It is noteworthy that he himself thinks his "methods of study and general principles of work" to be of such value that he feels justified in recommending them to others. Walter Scott's novels, the *Iliad* (Pope's translation), *Robinson Crusoe,* and *Pilgrim's Progress* were the books he read in his childhood. To this must be added the *Bible,* that invaluable Hebrew classic that has molded and influenced the style of so many men of genius.

"My mother forced me by steady daily toil, to learn long chapters of the *Bible* by heart; as well as to read its every syllable through, aloud, hard names and all from Genesis to the Apocalypse, about once a year: and to that discipline — patient, accurate, and resolute, I owe not only a knowledge of the book, which I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature."

He taught himself to read, and at five years of age was sending to the circulating libraries for his "second volumes." After tea his father would read to the mother, and John listened, or read, if he preferred.

"Thus I heard all the Shakspere comedies and historical plays again and again — all Scott, and all Don Quixote. [At seven Latin was begun; arithmetic later.] Geography I taught myself fast enough in my own way.

History was never thought of beyond what I chose to read of Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather.*"

The law was that John should find his own amusement. He had at first a bunch of keys, later a cart, a ball, "two boxes of well-cut wooden bricks," and finally the model of a two-arched bridge. On Sundays no toys were allowed, but he was permitted as a special concession to hold his mother's vinaigrette while he sat through the tedium of the service in Beresford Chapel.

"With these modest, but I still think, entirely sufficient possessions, and being always summarily whipped if I cried, did not do as I was bid, or stumbled on the stairs, I soon attained serene and secure methods of life and motion."

At twelve he had a drawing teacher; at thirteen Telford gave him a copy of Roger's *Italy,* and this "determined the main tenor of my life." Books and nature rather than teachers influenced him. Of one of his teachers he pours this withering sarcasm: "a more wretched, innocent, patient, insensible, unadmirable, uncomfortable, intolerable being never was produced in this era of England by the culture characteristic of her metropolis."

Out-of-Doors.—His best formative influence was God's out-of-doors. The elder Ruskin became the leading sherry merchant. Combining business with pleasure, he traveled with his family in a large carriage over much of England, Scotland, and the familiar parts of the Continent, taking orders but also visiting picture galleries, cathedrals, castles, places of historic and romantic interest, and the most picturesque spots of Europe. At an age when most boys are studying colored maps on which rivers are waving lines and cities only dots of printer's ink, little John was seeing Swiss mountains and Scotch lakes. We cannot estimate the influence of this ministry of inanimate nature upon this sensitive child. He soon learned "it was probably much happier to live in a small house, and have Warwick Castle to be astonished at, than to live in Warwick Castle and have nothing to be astonished at." When about fourteen he visited

Schauffhausen, and there fell under the spell that shaped his after life:

"Thus in perfect wealth of life and fire of heart . . . I went down that evening from the garden terrace of Schauffhausen with my destiny fixed in all of it that was to be sacred and useful. To that terrace and the shores of the Lake of Geneva, my heart and faith return to this day, in every impulse that is yet nobly alive in them, and every thought that has in it help or peace."

At Oxford.—In October, 1836, he matriculated at Oxford, entering Christ Church as a gentleman-commoner, thus escaping the rigors of an entrance examination, and enjoying the privilege of wearing a velvet cap and a flowing silk gown, but having the disadvantage of associating with a group of "young lords and squires who rode races, betted, shirked all work and got into scrapes." But John was not contaminated by the "bloods" who, strange to say, never ridiculed the shy youth whose mother had taken residence in Oxford that she might keep watch over her son. "None of the men," he writes, "through my whole college career, ever said one word in depreciation of vintner papa and his old-fashioned wife, or in sarcasm at my habitually spending my evenings with my mother." He won the esteem of his classmates by innocently asking a question which "floored" the lecturer, but he scandalized the gentleman-commoners by preparing and reading a fifteen minute essay before the class, thus violating a worthy tradition of those work-shirking gentlemen.

With the exception of winning the Newdigate prize in poetry, Ruskin did not especially distinguish himself at Oxford, although his own derogatory statements of the little that Oxford gave him must be taken with a grain of salt. "The whole time I was there," he writes, "my mind was simply in the state of a squash before it is a peascod." He was studious, read widely, and must have fallen under the spell of Oxford. Among his best acquisitions was the friendship of men like Acland, Liddell, Newton, and Buckland. In the winter of 1839-40, while preparing for his final examinations, his health failed; he was permitted to

postpone degree-taking, and with his parents he started in search of health. Two years later he returned, and in the summer term of 1842 took his degree.

Blessings and Banes of His Education. — Ruskin himself has told us what he thought the blessings and calamities of his early education. The blessings were *peace,* for he never heard the serenity of the home life broken by an angry word from father or mother, never heard a servant scolded, and did not know what anxiety and disorder were; an understanding of *faith* and *obedience* — "nothing was ever promised me that was not given and nothing ever told me that was not true"; the *habit of fixed attention;* and lastly "an extreme *perfection in palate* and all other bodily senses." These were the blessings; what were the calamities? "I had *nothing to love* . . . my parents were no more loved than the sun and moon." He lacked companionship. He needed the rough-and-tumble experience that comes from fellowship with boys. Naturally of a sensitive disposition, he did not have the home training to counteract this weakness. "The evil consequence, not that I grew up selfish or unaffectionate, but that when affection did come, it came with violence utterly rampant and unmanageable, at least by me, who never before had anything to manage." Second, "I had *nothing to endure*"; third, there was no "*precision* or *etiquette* of manners," and he "was never able to acquire bodily dexterity;" lastly and chief of ills, "my *judgment of right and wrong* and *power of independent action* were left entirely undeveloped." The boy suffered from excess of parental solicitude.

The lack of companionship, which one is tempted to call the most serious defect in Ruskin's education, may have had a partial compensation. Having no one to love, he loved nature; not as an abstraction, but as an individual personality:

> "The first joy of the year being its snowdrops, the second, and cardinal one, was in the almond blossom, . . . and for many a year to come — until indeed the whole of life became autumn to me — my chief prayer for the kindness of heaven to me, in its flowerful seasons, was that the frost might not touch the almond blossom."

Modern Painters. — Declining to enter the church, where his parents had hoped he might attain to the dignity of a bishopric and having no inclination to enter the sherry business, Ruskin upon his return from Chamouni in 1842, began the writing of *Modern Painters.* For years he had been interested in art; he had drawn and sketched with most patient persistence under the direction of good teachers; he had written and published essays like *The Poetry of Architecture.* Working with the enthusiasm of youth, he wrote the first volume of *Modern Painters* in eight months. It was published in May, 1843, as the work of "A Graduate of Oxford." As the author was but a youth of twenty-four, it was deemed best to publish the book anonymously. The book was immediately successful. Sidney Smith is reported to have said that it was "a work of transcendent talent," and that it "would work a complete revolution in the world of taste."

The purpose of the first volume is expressed in the cumbersome sub-title: *Their Superiority in the Art of Landscape Painting to all the Ancient Masters proved, by Examples of the True, the Beautiful, and the Intellectual, from the Works of Modern Artists, especially from those of J. M. W. Turner, Esq. R. A.* Though Ruskin must not be thought of as having discovered Turner, for Turner had become a member of the Royal Academy nearly twenty years before Ruskin was born, he interpreted and popularized the great landscape painter. In his enthusiastic defense of Turner's genius he sometimes unduly disparaged the work of others. "Ruskin," said George Richmond when the critic was indulging in a tirade of Claude, "when your criticism is constructive you talk like an angel; when it is destructive you declaim like a demon." Ruskin's vindication of Turner, in the language of Leslie Stephen, was "the most triumphant" ever published. Among those who were attracted by the criticism and impassioned style of the "Oxford Graduate" were Wordsworth, Tennyson, Miss Mitford, Miss Brontë, the Brownings, Dean Liddell, Jowett, and George Eliot. Holman Hunt, the young artist, records the effect the book had on him: "To get through the book I sat up most of the night. None

ould have felt more strongly than myself that it was written xpressly for him."

Before the second volume was written Ruskin's conception of rt had enlarged by acquaintance with the great Italian masters. he actual composition of the book took but about five months, ut he had spent three years in preparation. Though he had isited the Continent five times before the writing of the first olume, he had been strangely indifferent to the greatness of the arly painters. He had not realized that a critic of art should ave a comprehensive view of art. He now became conscious of ie greatness of Titian, Veronese, Bellini, and Perugino. In riting the second volume he wished "to explain the quality f beauty in all happy conditions of living organism," and to bring before the public two schools of painting — that of Angelo in Florence and Tintoret in Venice." For one day while in enice he and his friend Harding knocked at the door of the cuola di San Rocco to view the Tintorets, pictures then little nown. To his father Ruskin writes of the event as one of the rning-points in his life: "I have been quite overwhelmed today y a man whom I never dreamed of — Tintoret." And a day ter he continues, "I never was so utterly crushed to the earth efore any human intellect as I was today before Tintoret."

The style of the second volume differs from the impassioned oquence of the first, due perhaps because the first was written "great haste and indignation," while the second sought elevaon and dignity of style by imitating Hooker. "It was not my roper style," said Ruskin himself. The effect of the book was turn the British public to the primitive painters.

It was ten years before the third and fourth volumes appeared. that interval he wrote *The Seven Lamps of Architecture, The tones of Venice,* and *Examples of the Architecture of Venice.* he last volume appeared in 1860. E. T. Cook, in his *Life of uskin,* gives this summary of the five volumes of *Modern ainters:*

"1. The First Volume is a defence of Turner, against the charge at his later pictures were 'unnatural.' This volume was, as Ruskin says,

the expansion of a magazine article, and was written in all the heat an haste of youthful enthusiasm. 2. Then came a pause, during which th author's principal study was among the early Italian painters and Tinto retto. Both alike commanded his passionate admiration. The Secon Volume thus became in part a hymn of praise, inspired by the religiou ideal of Giotto and his circle; and in part an essay upon the Imaginatio inspired by Tintoret's works in the Scuola di San Rocco. 3. Ten year now intervened — years of widened and deepened study in many direction The earlier chapters of the Third Volume are an interlude, necessary i order to establish a harmony between what had preceded and what was t follow. 4. The Fourth Volume and the first two Parts of the Fifth . . are an essay on the Beauty of Mountains, Trees, and Clouds; while lastly 5. The remainder of that final volume, written four years later, is a treatis on 'the relations of Art to God and man.'"

Marriage. — Before continuing a discussion of his literary work, at this point a word must be said concerning his marriage Euphemia Chalmers Gray was the daughter of an old friend o the Ruskin family, George Gray, a lawyer. Upon one of he visits to the Ruskin family, while still a child, she had challenged Ruskin to write a story. *The King of the Golden River* was th result, a story which Ruskin characterized as "a fairly good imitation of Grimm and Dickens, mixed with a little true Alpin feeling of my own." It was written in 1841. Six years late Miss Gray was a visitor at Denmark Hill, the Ruskin home She was young, beautiful, and vivacious. Ruskin's mothe thought her talented son would be more likely to spend les time in roaming over the Continent, if he were married. T please his mother Ruskin proposed, was accepted, and they were married at Bowerswell, Perth, on April 10, 1848.

Six years later the wife left her husband and returned to he parents. The gossip of the time is reflected in a letter o Mrs. Carlyle to Dr. John Carlyle:

"There is a great deal of talking about the Ruskins here at present Mrs. Ruskin has been taken to Scotland by *her* parents; and Ruskin i gone to Switzerland with *his;* and the separation is understood to b permanent. There is even a rumor that *Mrs.* Ruskin is to sue for divorce. I know nothing about it, except that I have always pitied Mrs Ruskin, while people generally blame her — for love of dress and compan

nd flirtation. She was too young and pretty to be so left to her own evices as she was by her Husband, who seemed to wish nothing more of er but the credit of having a pretty, well-dressed Wife."

Mrs. Ruskin obtained a divorce; resumed her maiden name, nd was married to J. E. Millais, later president of the Royal Academy, in July, 1855. After a lapse of many years, in speaking of this unfortunate episode in his life, Ruskin said, "I have ad many deep sorrows, but this was not one of them."

"No blame appears to be attached to either side [writes Ada Earland]. ady Millais made an admirable wife. She was much better suited to Millais than Ruskin. . . . Millais fully appreciated her worth. Her previous marriage barred her from Court. His dying request was that Queen Victoria would receive his wife. He had his desire: she was sent for— y command."

Seven Lamps of Architecture.—This book, written between November, 1848, and April, 1849, is the first of those that were illustrated by Ruskin himself. Hamerton's comment would indicate that the work was well done: "No architectural draughtsman whom I can name, with the one glorious exception of Méryon, has ever drawn buildings in a way comparable to Ruskin."

The Seven Lamps are Truth, Beauty, Power, Sacrifice, Obedience, Labor, and Memory. This young reformer insisted that ruth and beauty and absolute sincerity should enter into the onstruction of all buildings; "that a building should look what is, and be what it is built to serve;" that the business of the rchitect is to decorate construction, not to construct decoration; nd that a nation writes its autobiography in its architecture. In *he Crown of Wild Olives* he tells us, "The book I called *even Lamps* was to show that certain right states of temper nd moral feeling were the magic powers by which all good architecture without exception had been produced."

As more people are interested in building than in painting, e book made a wider appeal than *Modern Painters*. "It ook conventional ideas," writes Mr. Harrison, "to the roots, nd flung forth a body of new and pregnant ideas." The work

is especially significant as giving decided indications of the germ of those ideas which led Ruskin a few years later to turn fro art to man, to become a zealous reformer of social and politic conditions rather than a critic of painting and architecture.

Stones of Venice.—Ruskin himself tells us that *Stones Venice* had

"no other aim than to show that the Gothic architecture of Venice h risen out of . . . a state of pure national faith and of domestic virtu and that its Renaissance architecture had risen out of . . . a state national infidelity and of domestic corruption."

This is in accord with Ruskin's doctrine that all great art is th product of great and good souls—a noble theory, but one n in accord with the facts. Turner, Ruskin's idol, was not a gre and noble soul; and, as Mr. F. Harrison points out in the ca of architecture, the Parthenon, the Pantheon at Rome, the Churc of St. Sophia at Constantinople, and St. Paul's in London we built in times when there appeared "some of the most scathin satires upon social and personal corruption that survive in Gree Latin, Byzantine, and English literature."

After months of industrious study and the drawing of man sketches of the very stones that composed the Venetian palac and churches, he published the first volume in 1851. After furth studies in Venice he published the second volume in the sprin of 1853. The last appeared in October of the same year.

The influence of *Stones of Venice* was twofold: it arouse an interest in Venetian architecture and modified—some thin injuriously—the development of English architecture; and se ond, it exerted a social influence.

In noting Ruskin's influence in awakening an interest Venice, it must be remembered that the beauty and glory a romance of Venice, qualities made familiar to us by the pen poet and the brush of artist, were not appreciated before Ruskin time. In the eighteenth century Venice was considered "a ci of murky shadows." The common opinion was expressed Gibbon, who wrote in 1765, "Of all the towns in Italy, I a

ast satisfied with Venice," and then in the same paragraph he fers to "a large square decorated with the worst architecture ever saw," a strange description to apply to San Marco.

In *Stones of Venice,* as we also noted in *Seven Lamps of rchitecture,* we find expression of Ruskin's growing interest the social problems of his age. As he studied architecture he lt more and more that the workman is greater than the work. is later vehement denunciation of modern social conditions is ore than foreshadowed in *Stones of Venice,* especially in s chapter on "The Nature of Gothic Architecture" — the chapr in the second volume which Ruskin himself considered the ost important in the book. Great art can be the product only those who have freedom, and freedom means the opportunity do work that is a joy.

"There might be more freedom in England [he writes], though her udal lords' lightest words were worth men's lives, and though the blood the vexed husbandmen dropped in the furrows of her fields, than there while the animation of her multitudes is sent like fuel to feed the factory noke, and the strength of them is given daily to be wasted into the fineess of a web, or racked into the exactness of a line."

ater this chapter was printed separately and distributed among orkingmen.

Unto This Last. — The year 1860 marks a transition in the e of Ruskin; it was then that he turned from a passionate terest in art to an equally passionate interest in what used be called political economy. To see and love the Beautiful d seemed the vital need of the public, but as he grew older he as deeply impressed by the misery and poverty of the millions. ne beauty which is a joy forever should be a joy for all. How uld the masses enjoy art, if they were hungry, ill-clad, and elterless? *Unto This Last,* the title taken from the Biblical rase, "Unto this last as unto thee," first appeared, 1860, as ur essays in *The Cornhill Magazine.* Two years later the says were published in book form. Combating the established olitical Economy, the essays naturally aroused much opposition. It is no pleasure," wrote a critic, "to see genius mistaking its

power, and rendering itself ridiculous." The opposition was so vehement that the magazine discontinued the series. So slow was the sale of the book that in ten years the first edition of 1,000 copies had not been exhausted. But later for thirty years the annual sale was 2,000 copies.

What were the teachings of *Unto This Last?* The germ of his political economy is contained in these words: *"There is no wealth but Life* — Life, including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings." To the present mind such doctrine does not appear revolutionary, but to the political economist of 1860 it seemed presumptuous for an art critic to inject his humanitarian ideals into the principles of the "dismal science." In his chapter on "The Veins of Wealth" occur lines which seem inspired in their passionate appeal:

> "In fact, it may be discovered that the true veins of wealth are purple — and not in Rock, but in Flesh — perhaps even that the final outcome and consummation of all wealth is in the producing as many as possible full-breathed, bright-eyed, and happy-hearted human creatures. . . In some far-away and yet undreamt-of hour, I can even imagine that England may cast all thoughts of possessive wealth back to the barbaric nations among whom they first arose; and that, while the sands of the Indus and adamant of Golconda may yet stiffen the housings of the charger, and flash from the turban of the slave, she as a Christian mother may at last attain to the virtues and treasures of a Heathen one, and be able to lead forth her Sons, saying, 'These are MY JEWELS.'"

Munera Pulveris and *Time and Tide* are a continuation of his studies in political economy. The first chapter of *Munera Pulveris* (Gifts of the Dust) appeared in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1863. Such a storm of criticism arose that the series was discontinued by the magazine. The book appeared in 1872. *Time and Tide,* twenty-five letters to a cork-cutter of Sunderland, plans a reconstruction of the social order.

It is not surprising that Ruskin's ideas of political economy aroused bitter opposition, for some of them were fantastic and Utopian. He had neither broad scholarship nor first-hand acquaintance with social and industrial conditions. What he

ad was a sensitiveness of soul that burned with a noble indigna-on at the wrongs of humanity, and the vision of a seer who nows that such wrongs are preventable. Many of the ideas hich seemed revolutionary in 1860 have now become the com-nonplaces of politicians and reformers.

"He is forgotten now [writes a biographer] because he went forth to a moral wilderness and cried, 'Repent and reform, for the kingdom f heaven is at hand.' The kingdom of heaven is not yet come on us, erhaps is yet far off, but John was the Forerunner of that which will one ay come to pass."

Sesame and Lilies. — Originally given as lectures, this has ecome the most popular of his books. When published as a ook in 1865, it was dedicated to Φίλη, Ruskin's name for Lady Iount-Temple, but it was written especially for Rose La Touche, he young girl whom he loved and who in later years refused to ecome his wife.

The lectures discuss the influence of good books and of good omen. Life is short, therefore waste no time in reading value-ss books. From this he passes to a denunciation of the brutality f the age. "I've got some Billingsgate spoken out in the first cture," he wrote to Coventry Patmore, "which relieves one's ind, like swearing, even when there's nobody to hear." In the cture on "Lilies: Of Queens' Gardens" we have some beautiful houghts on women and their influence. The field of her influ-nce is as the garden of a queen. The lily is the emblem of her urity and the scepter of her rule.

The Crown of Wild Olive was also first given as lectures; he topics being "Work," "Traffic," and "War." He was called o Cambridge to receive an honorary degree. In writing to his other about this event, he said "the Orator dwelt more on *he Crown of Wild Olive* than on any other of my books."

The Ethics of the Dust consists of dialogues, for the most art imaginary, on crystals, Egyptian antiquities, and many other hings. Carlyle wrote from Chelsea, "*The Ethics of the Dust,* hich I devoured without pause, and intend to look at again, a most shining Performance!" The public, however, thought

otherwise, and Ruskin himself tells us that his publishers "begged him to write no more in dialogue."

Queen of the Air, founded on lectures given at University College, is a study of Greek mythology. He presents the meaning of myths as they had been refined by the poets and philosophers. "He claimed," writes Mr. Cook, "that his long study of the clouds and fields and rocks gave him an opportunity of entering sympathetically into the interpretation of nature-myths and nature-poets." When Carlyle read the book, he wrote to Ruskin, "No such Book have I met with for long years past. The one soul now in the world who seems to feel as I do on the highest matters." With Ruskin himself the book was a favorite.

Fors Clavigera.—The two most important writings of his later years are *Fors Clavigera* and *Praeterita.* The first consists of ninety-six letters to the workmen and laborers of Great Britain. The title has occasioned much perplexity. An ardent student of Ruskin's, after five pages of close analysis of the subtleties of the title, tells us that *Fors* means Force, Fortitude, and Fortune; that *Clavigera* means the Club, the Key, the Nail.

> "Ruskin intended by his title (among many other meanings) to indicate his *purpose* of showing how in the lives of men Fortune appoints things irreversibly, of fastening in sure places the truths necessary to their well-being, and of nailing down, as on the barn-door, the follies of the age; and to indicate in his *method* 'the desultory and accidental character of his work.'"

The work is both a criticism upon the civilization of his age and an attempt in social reconstruction.

Some critics consider *Fors Clavigera* Ruskin's masterpiece, while others find the letters "mere studies in reviling and abusing." It is "Ruskin's *Hamlet,* and also his Apocalypse," writes Mr. F. Harrison. "It is the self-revelation of a sensitive soul at one moment consumed with a 'divine rage against iniquity,' and at the next unreservedly confessing some personal whim. Using letters as his literary form, he had opportunity to touch upon any subject that for the moment interested him. Whatever flashed into his mind might be discussed, and where was a mind

more susceptible to suggestion?" His intimate American friend, Professor Norton, once wrote:

"Never was a soul more open and accessible to immediate impressions. . . . It was like an Æolian harp, its strings quivering musically in serene days under the touch of the soft air; but, as the clouds gathered and the winds rose, vibrating in the blast with a tension that might break the sounding-board itself."

Praeterita.—In writing *Fors Clavigera* Ruskin had touched upon many personal incidents. This led Professor Norton to suggest to Ruskin that he write an autobiography. Ruskin followed the suggestion and in 1885 published *Praeterita,* a work never fully completed. In the language of Mr. Harrison, it is certainly the most charming thing that he ever gave to the world." The first hundred pages are especially charming in their substance and style. The frank revelations of his innocent childhood, the keen observations, the analysis of the faults and virtues of his early education, his insight into character, the marvelous simplicity and melody of his English, all combine to make his autobiography one of the great Books of Confession. With the writing of *Praeterita* his literary work ended.

Further Biographical Facts.—In 1869 he was elected Slade Professor of Art in the University of Oxford. For about ten years of the time between 1870 and 1884, with signal success, he lectured to the Oxford undergraduates. Although Ruskin lived to be over eighty years of age, he was never a robust man. Of an exceedingly nervous temperament, he finally broke down under the weight of private sorrow, and disappointment that the great world paid so little heed to his teachings. His frequent mental disturbances caused him to resign his professorship. In 1888 he made the last of his many trips abroad. During his last ten years he lived the quiet life of one who had withdrawn from the work and worry of the world. He died January 20, 1900.

Personal Characteristics.—In private intercourse Ruskin was one of the gentlest and humblest of men. This is in strange contrast to the dogmatism and self-assertiveness of his writings. All who knew him well agreed with Jowett's verdict after a visit to

Brantwood: "He is the gentlest and most innocent of mankind." And Max Müller gave expression to the same opinion: "He was really the most tolerant and agreeable man in society. . . . I remember him diffident as a young girl, full of questions and grateful for any information." In conversation he did not, like Dr. Johnson or Macaulay, assume the rôle of dictator. But this does not mean that he never indulged in retort. When he was requested to give money to assist a workingman in the publishing of a book of poems, he replied, "Certainly not. Mr. Ruskin would set poets to work, not workingmen to rhyme."

In money matters he was the soul of generosity. Inheriting a large fortune, he gave away during his lifetime, to public charities, to relatives, to struggling artists, to reform movements, more than he inherited.

His critics have charged him with being a sentimentalist, and Ruskin himself has confessed to being "an impetuous, inconsiderate, weakly communicative person." But he has written also a noble defense:

> "Because I have passed my life in almsgiving, not in fortune-hunting; because I have labored for the honor of others, not my own, . . . because I have lowered my rents, and assured the comfortable lives of my poor tenants, instead of taking from them all I could force for the roofs they needed; because I love a wood walk better than a London street, and would rather watch a seagull fly than shoot it, and rather hear a thrush sing than eat it; finally, because I never disobeyed my mother, because I have honored all women with solemn worship, and have been kind even to the unthankful and evil; therefore the hacks of English art and literature wag their heads at me, and the poor wretch who pawns the dirty linen of his soul daily for a bottle of sour wine and a cigar, talks of the 'effeminate sentimentality of Ruskin.'"

His Style.—When Tennyson was asked to name the six authors who had written the stateliest English prose, he mentioned Hooker, Bacon, Milton, Jeremy Taylor, De Quincey, and Ruskin—a noble group of great writers. To enroll Ruskin with this list is high praise, but not too high, for Ruskin, though at times guilty of fallacious reasoning, and querulous with petty complainings, is one of the masters of English prose. Lord

Morley calls him one of the "three giants of prose style" of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, Saintsbury aptly writes of the "flamboyant variety" of his prose, and Brownell thinks that his position as an English classic is imperiled by his "lack of substance in his matter and the lack of form in his style." It is true that there are times when his emotional excess and love of adornment lead him into a flamboyant variety of expression, and his digressions and self-sufficiency prevent his work from attaining that classic unity and finality which we find in the greatest masters; but nevertheless there are so many pages which in their beauty of form and nobility of substance attain perfection that he must be numbered among the few masters of style.

In *Praeterita* Ruskin tells us that "writing never gave me the kind of pain of which Carlyle so wildly complains. . . . It gave me no serious trouble." This, however, is but a partial truth, for Ruskin often was most painstaking in his methods of literary composition. E. T. Cook, his latest and best biographer, after an examination of his method of composition, reaches this conclusion: "Ruskin spared no labor . . . to assist his mastery of language and intuitive sense for melody."

The following well-known passage from *Unto This Last* is a good illustration of the beautiful charm of his style. In it we have simplicity of language, melodious phrasing, poetical imagery, elevation of thought, and a climax in which a Biblical expression is used with consummate art:

"So long as men live by bread, the far-away valleys must laugh, as they are covered with the gold of God, and the shouts of His happy multitude ring round the winepress and the well. . . . No scene is continually and untiringly loved, but one rich by joyful human labor; smooth field; fair in garden; full in orchard, trim, sweet, and frequent in homestead; ringing with voices of vivid existence. No air is sweet that is silent; it is only sweet when full of low currents of under-sound — triplets of birds, and murmur and chirp of insects, and deep-toned words of men, and wayward trebles of childhood. As the art of life is learned, it will be found at last that all lovely things are also necessary — the wild flower by the wayside, as well as the tended corn; and the wild birds and creatures of the forest, as well as the tended cattle; because man doth not

live by bread alone, but also by the desert manna; by every wondrous word and unknowable work of God."

Influence as a Writer.—La Farge has said that Ruskin's long and laborious work on art has no *authority* with artists, and Whistler, who had engaged in a lawsuit with Ruskin, called him the "Peter Parley of painting." It may be true that Ruskin's art criticism lacks finality and authority, but he has done more to quicken appreciation of art than any other English writer, and every artist whose pictures have been bought by an appreciative public is under obligation to the man who popularized art. His books on art have been translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, and Hungarian. His influence has been fruitful because he insisted upon truth and sincerity, upon the unity of art, and upon the value of art, not for its own sake, but for its relation to human life.

He was not fitted either by training or by temperament to found and develop a system of social reconstruction. But he was fitted to protest in winged words against an industrial system that considered men lower than dividends and cheaper than the beasts of the field. He perhaps more than any other writer has helped to bring about a new spirit in the study of social problems; the spirit which, instead of wasting itself in the dialectics of political economy, strives to improve social and industrial conditions by preaching and practicing that justice which is founded on the gospel of love.

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CHAPTER XX

Tennyson

TENNYSON is undoubtedly one of the foremost masters of English song. During his lifetime he enjoyed renown and popularity such as has been allotted to but few English poets and as the years since his death grow in number his fame seems to suffer no diminution. He was fortunate in the number of his days, his life being almost coextensive with the nineteenth century. From August, 1809, to October, 1892, is more than eighty-three years. The sum total of the lives of the three brilliant poets living when Tennyson was a boy, Byron, Keats, and Shelley, is but a few more years than eighty-three; and counting a man's life work in literature as beginning at twenty, a very early age, the three poets named had about thirty years of work to Tennyson's more than twice thirty. During these many years of activity volume after volume to the number of twenty-six issued from his prolific, but not hasty, pen — love songs, ballads, a so-called medley, patriotic war songs, elegies, odes, translations, pastorals, romances, philosophic and religious meditations — all reflecting the science and art, the hope and gloom, the faith and doubt, the aspiration and despondency of the nineteenth century. Byron despised his age; Keats sought for inspiration in the Golden Age of the past; Shelley dreamed of the Golden Age that is yet to be; Tennyson is the poet of his own age.

Parentage and Early Education. — The story of Tennyson's life is not the narrative

> "Of moving accidents by flood and field,
> Of hair-breadth scapes i' the imminent deadly breach,"

but the record of the quiet, prosperous, meditative artist. Chaucer was a prisoner ransomed by his king, sent on missions to

oreign lands, and robbed of the king's money; Shakspere was a usy man of affairs; Byron spent his last year in a chivalrous xpedition to succor Greece; Scott broke down in a noble ndeavor to pay his debts. Nothing of this sort made exciting ne life of Tennyson; he was first and last a poet, and a poet nromantic enough to be growing more and more prosperous as ne years passed by.

Alfred was the fourth in a family of twelve children, ten of hom lived to be over seventy. The father, the Rev. Dr. George layton Tennyson, was rector of Somersby and Wood Enderby. Ie was a man of large frame and various talents; of good educa- on, enabling him to prepare his sons for the university. In iew of the early melancholy of Alfred, it is significant that the ather was subject to fits of despondency which scared the young lfred, who sometimes went out through the black night, and nrew himself on a grave in the churchyard, praying to be eneath the sod himself. The poem *Isabel* is a partial descrip- on of the mother of the family. On the whole, Tennyson's days his boyhood were happy days. The boys and girls were of an naginative nature; they played games, improvised dramas, told nd wrote stories, read romances, and wrote verses. They had ealthy English natures, and loved to roam the fields. Nature nd art had made the region about Somersby rich in beauty. It easy to imagine the youthful Alfred, like Shakspere in War- ickshire, spending his early, impressionable years in loving inti- acy with God's out-of-doors. In the summer time the family ent their holiday in a cottage by the sea. His poetry, from *reak, Break, Break* to *Crossing the Bar,* bears witness to Tenny- n's love of the sea. He himself said, "Somehow water is the ement I love best of the four."

In 1827 *Poems by Two Brothers* appeared, with the modest otto: *Haec nos novimus esse nihil.* The two brothers were harles and Alfred, who had much in common. Before this lfred had written in imitation of Thomson, of Pope, and of yron. There was nothing of striking merit in these poems. ennyson in his mature days was half-ashamed of these first

fruits, but still later he said, "Some of it is better than I thought it was!".

At Cambridge.—In 1828 the two brothers entered Trinity College, Cambridge. Here the greatest influence in his life was the friendship with Arthur Hallam, of whom we shall learn more under the discussion of *In Memoriam.* Tennyson's undergraduate friends were deeply impressed by his personality; they believed he was destined to do great things. In 1829, his poem *Timbuctoo* won the Chancellor's gold medal. The poem, however, is not much above the level of the usual college prize poem. In 1830 appeared *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical;* some of these are among his most musical productions. Hallam reviewed the book in the *Englishman's Magazine,* calling attention to "a strange earnestness in his worship of beauty." But *Blackwood's* characterized some of the poems as "dismal drivel," and the *Quarterly Review* treated the book with contempt. Tennyson felt this criticism deeply, for in spite of all his brusqueness his soul was keenly sensitive to criticism. Late in life he wrote to the Duke of Argyll of "the pen punctures of these parasitic animalcules of the press."

Poems of 1842.—In the early spring of 1831 Tennyson left Cambridge, owing to the serious illness of his father, and during the next ten years lived at various places with his mother and sisters. These are the years of his deepest trials, of his melancholy and despair. His father had died, Hallam was lost, his own health was poor, and he was deeply in love and too poor to marry. He also was convinced that the public did not care for his style of poetry. But although he published no book, he studied diligently and wrote much. The poetic instinct was too strong to suffer him to be inert. Then in 1842 came the *Poems* which turned the tide of popular approval in his favor. The two volumes which then appeared contain some of the finest poetry of the nineteenth century, for therein were *Ulysses, Dora,* and *Locksley Hall.* Tennyson's friends, and many of them were the brightest men in England, were enthusiastic. Even Wordsworth acknowledged the excellence of the poems, saying of *Dora*

Mr. Tennyson, I have been endeavoring all my life to write a pastoral like your *Dora,* and have not succeeded." In America, Hawthorne, Emerson, Lowell, and Poe became his admirers.

An Important Year. — In the year 1850 three important events occurred in the life of Tennyson — in May a few copies of *In Memoriam* were printed for friends, and later an edition appeared for general circulation without the name of the author; in June he married Emily Sellwood, whom he had loved for ten years, but whom he felt he should not ask to share his poverty; on November 19 he was appointed Poet Laureate. His marriage was a singularly happy one. In after years he said, "The peace of God came into my life before the altar when I wedded her." His wife had a sympathetic nature, a quiet sense of humor, and good mind. "I am proud of her intellect," wrote her husband. His son thinks the Laureateship was due chiefly to Prince Albert's admiration for *In Memoriam.* Another version is that Sir Robert Peel, the prime minister, was so strongly impressed when *Ulysses* was read to him that he was led to acquiesce in the request of R. M. Milnes that Tennyson be appointed. In reference to the honor Tennyson at this time writes: "I have no passion for courts, but a great love for privacy. It is, I believe, scarce £100 a year, and my friend, R. M. Milnes, tells me that the price of the patent and court dress will eat up all the first year's income."

Prosperous Years. — Henceforth Tennyson's years are years of plenty, years of honorable renown and growing fame. In 1855 *Maud* was finished. This is an imaginative and passionate poem with dramatic power, although without dramatic form. The poem itself, although furnishing the means which enabled Tennyson to buy Farringford, that beautiful and secluded spot in the Isle of Wight, was not popular with the general public. With Tennyson, however, the poem remained a favorite; when asked to read aloud from his own poems he usually chose *Maud.* Then in 1859 appeared the four *Idylls of the King,* concerning which a fuller account follows. *Enoch Arden* was published in 1864, of which sixty thousand copies were speedily sold. Tenny-

son's son thinks that the volume containing *Enoch Arden,* next to *In Memoriam,* was the most popular of his father's works.

During his later years Tennyson wrote a number of dramas. In 1875 *Queen Mary* was published and a year later was produced at the Lyceum Theater; in 1876 came *Harold;* then *The Falcon* was produced in 1879 and enjoyed a run of sixty-seven nights; in 1881 *The Cup* was produced at the Lyceum Theater; in 1882 *The Promise of May* was produced at the Globe Theater; *Becket* appeared in 1884; then in 1892 *The Foresters* ended the list. On the whole it cannot be said that Tennyson's dramatic poems were eminently successful; at least they have added nothing to his reputation. This may be due partly to a lack of dramatic ability in one who excelled as a lyric poet; or it may be the fault of a public which cares but little for the poetic drama.

Last Years.—In 1884 a peerage was offered Tennyson, an honor which was reluctantly accepted. He "did not want to alter his plain Mr." He had previously been blamed by literary men for thrice refusing titled honors; he now accepted, saying to his son, "By Gladstone's advice I have consented to take the peerage, but for my own part I shall regret my simple name all my life."

Tennyson is a good example of the combination of vigorous mind with sturdy body. Early in life, as was the case with Carlyle, Tennyson thought he had an incurable disease which would prematurely end his days. But his bodily strength in his old age was remarkable, as was the elasticity and freshness of his mind. To the end he breathed the indomitable spirit of his *Ulysses:*

> "Tho' much is taken, much abides: and tho'
> We are not now that strength which in old days
> Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are:
> One equal temper of heroic hearts
> Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

At Aldworth in Surrey, the foundation stone of which Tennyson himself laid in 1868, the poet spent his autumn and winte

onths; here he was visited by the great of all the earth, who ıme to see the most illustrious English poet.

"Year after year [writes Aubrey de Vere] he trod its two stately rraces with men the most noted of their time, statesmen, warriors, men f letters, science, and art, some of royal race, some famous in far lands, ıt none more welcome to him than the friends of his youth. . . . The ays which I passed there yearly with him and his were the happiest days f each year. . . . And the sea-murmurs of Freshwater will blend with ıe sighing of the woods around Aldworth, for me, as for many more orthy, a music, if mournful, yet full of consolation."

Tennyson died October 6, 1892. His departure was like the assing of his own Arthur, or like the death of a prophet of old. Vhile still conscious he had asked for his *Shakspere,* and his son rought him a copy containing his favorite plays, *King Lear, ymbeline,* and *Troilus and Cressida.* In the calm hours of the ıoonlight night, surrounded by his loving family, he passed from out our bourne of time and place" into the Great Beyond, s his son repeated the prayer he felt his father would have sked for—

"God accept him!
Christ receive him!"

The Princess.—Of the longer works of Tennyson the three ıost widely known are *The Princess, In Memoriam,* and the *dylls of the King.* Each of these deals in a poetic way with a reat idea: *The Princess* with the "eternal feminine;" *In Iemoriam* with the problem of immortality; and in the *Idylls* e have a portrayal of the old struggle between the Soul and the ense. The first edition of *The Princess* appeared in 1847; uring the next few years new editions appeared with alterations ıd additions, notably the insertion of the intercalary poems.

The Princess has the sub-title, "A Medley." This may be ecause seven different persons are supposed to be telling the tale, r it may be because there is a mixture of modern ideas with edieval customs, or because of the blending "of a delicate satire ith solemn exhortation." "You have seen," wrote Tennyson to

Dawson, "that if women ever were to play such freaks, the bur lesque and the tragic might go hand in hand."

The story is a romantic tale with a young princess as a heroine a prince as a hero, and a university founded, instructed, and con trolled by women. No man is to enter, upon pain of death This prohibition is a challenge to a prince, to whom the princess had been betrothed in childhood, and his two mischievous com rades, Cyril and Florian, who, dressing like women, invade th sacred precincts of the university. They are found out and igno miniously ejected. The father of the prince declares war upo the father of the princess to compel the fulfilment of the earl marriage contract. The war is decided by a tournament in whic the luckless prince and his followers are defeated; the universit becomes a temporary hospital in which the princess becomes th tender nurse of the injured prince; reads to him from "a volum of the poets of her land;" falls in love with him, and the marry.

The Princess Ida and the prince are the leading character of the story. The princess herself is a young woman with laud able ambition to help her own sex; she is not an intellectua "blue-stocking," but an altogether attractive personality —

> "The Princess; liker to the inhabitant
> Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,
> Than our man's earth; such eyes were in her head,
> And so much grace and power. . . ."

The prince is not a good hero; it is said that Shakspere has n heroes, only heroines; so, too, Tennyson's heroines are mor convincing than his heroes. This prince is subject to "weir seizures," and is weak in personality. It has been said that i was not quite fair for Tennyson to construct a university doome to failure, and to compel the princess to marry a man mani festly her inferior.

Women and Education. — Tennyson is reported to have sai that the two great social questions impending in England wer "the housing and education of the poor man before making hi

ır master, and the higher education of women." Mr. Andrew ang thinks that the question of woman, her wrongs, her rights, er education, her capabilities, was not in the air in 1847. On ıe other hand, Katharine L. Bates, after enumerating writers rom Plato to Mary Wollstonecraft who may have given Tenny- on a hint from which he evolved his poem, asks, "What need of ooks, when the question was vocal, even to shrillness, in the English air?" One is inclined to believe Miss Bates is right, for he present colleges for women at Oxford and Cambridge are vitnesses to the long discussion that preceded their establishment. Girton College, two miles out from the heart of Cambridge, was odged in its present handsome building in 1873. Ideas about he higher education of women must have been agitating the English mind long before 1873, for the English mind is con- ervative.

What kind of a university has Tennyson constructed for the ducation of his women?

"What are its distinguishing features [asks Miss Bates]? Beauty of ress, manifest in those academic silks of daffodil and lilac, 'zoned with old'; beauty of abode, a palace of sculptured arches, laurelled porches, olumned halls, marble courts sweet with roses and jasmine, and musical vith fountains and the 'pealing' nightingale; beauty in every appointment nd appliance, in sphere-blazoned lamps, silver-voiced clocks, silken couch urtains, purple footcloth, desk of satin-wood; most of all, the beauty of ymbolic art, of helmed Pallas and crescent-crowned Diana, countless ıemorials of woman's victory and emblems of woman's aspiration. . . .

"But that inner intellectual beauty for which lovely forms and gleam- ıg colors were none too rich a raiment is lacking in this university. If ıere is any sound scholarship, any genuine quest for truth, any real energy f thought in those 'stately theatres,' we get no hint of it from the ıocking reporter."

Perhaps it is not fair to judge of Tennyson's ideas of woman's ducation by a too close and literal interpretation of *The Princess,* or after all the poem is but "a medley," a blending of jest and arnest. If the serious student of education turn to the poem or definite help in framing a curriculum for a woman's college, e will be disappointed. What he will find is the expression of

general guiding principles in the stateliest of blank verse. No one has ever written more nobly or fairly about woman than has Tennyson in the lines beginning:

> "The woman's cause is man's: they rise or sink
> Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free:
> For she that out of Lethe scales with man
> The shining steps of Nature, shares with man
> His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,
> Stays all the fair young planet in her hands —
> If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
> How shall men grow? . . .
> . . . . .
> For woman is not undevelopt man,
> But diverse: could we make her as the man,
> Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is this,
> Not like to like, but like in difference.
> Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
> The man be more of woman, she of man;
> He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
> Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
> She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
> Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
> Till at the last she set herself to man
> Like perfect music unto noble words;
> And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
> Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all their powers,
> Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
> Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
> Distinct in individualities,
> But like each other ev'n as those who love.
> Then comes the statelier Eden back to men:
> Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm:
> Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
> May these things be!"

Lyrical Interludes. — It is said that Shakspere's songs are so musical that they sing themselves; the same might be said of the interludes that Tennyson inserted in the third edition of 1850. They are among the finest songs in the English language. Their unity, exquisite melody, and appeal to the widest and tenderest of human sympathies make them the best remembered part of

he Princess. Tennyson introduced them to emphasize his idea at human love and affection are more important than university arning. As he said, the child is the heroine of the poem. Sweet and Low," and the so-called "Bugle Song," are known herever the English language is spoken. One of the finest illustrations in our literature of the harmony and melody in words is ne following poem:

"Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

"Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

"Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

"Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more."

Tennyson called attention to the fact that few readers of this oem realized that it was an unrhymed lyric.

In Memoriam. — This poem is one of the masterpieces of the ineteenth century; some admirers say it is *the* masterpiece. It ertainly is one of the three greatest elegies in the English lanuage, ranking with Milton's *Lycidas* and Shelley's *Adonais.* *n Memoriam* commemorates the early death of Arthur Henry Hallam, who died in Vienna, September 15, 1833. His body was aid away in Clevedon Church, on the banks of the Severn.

"The Danube to the Severn gave
The darkened heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave."

Arthur Henry Hallam was the son of the eminent historian, Henry Hallam, who saw in his son the promise of a brilliant career. Nor was the father alone in his estimate of the ability of the youthful Hallam. All who associated intimately with him were charmed by his personality and attracted by his ability. Gladstone thought "he resembled a passing emanation from some other and less darkly checkered world;" and late in life the same statesman wrote:

"It is the simple truth that Arthur Henry Hallam was a spirit so exceptional that everything with which he was brought into relation during his shortened passage through this world came to be, through this contact, glorified by a touch of the ideal. . . . In this world there is one unfailing test of the highest excellence. It is that the man should be felt to be greater than his works. And in the case of Arthur Hallam, all that knew him knew that the work was transcended by the man."

Tennyson and Hallam enjoyed close friendship for five years—

"And those five years its richest field,"

sings the poet in the forty-sixth canto.

In October of the year 1828, they entered Trinity College, Cambridge. Although Alfred was a year and a half older than Arthur, their early acquaintance soon ripened into that rare intimacy so characteristic of college fellowship between men of kindred souls. In the eighty-seventh canto Tennyson gives us a picture of their college life:

"Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;

"Where one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string;
And one would pierce an outer ring,
And one an inner, here and there;

"And last the master-bowman, he
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free

"From point to point, with power and grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

"And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo."

When vacation time came Arthur would occasionally accompany his friend to the Somersby rectory, where he met and soon loved Emilia, the charming young sister of the poet. They were betrothed in 1832, the same year in which Hallam left Cambridge to take up the study of law in London. Here his health began to fail and the solicitous father took his boy on a trip to the Continent in search of health and recreation. His condition was not considered serious, consequently the news of his death came as a great shock to the coterie of warm friends whom he had left in England. "The elder Hallam was with him in his room, busy writing letters. His son lay down on a sofa to sleep, and thus he passed peacefully away."

It is sometimes said that had Hallam lived he would have surpassed in achievement all his youthful contemporaries, some of whom became famous; that he would have written finer poetry than Tennyson's, or been more useful as a statesman than Gladstone. This is vain and fruitless speculation. What we do know is that the "fair companionship" of these two gifted young men has resulted in a rare work of art, an elegy which insures young Hallam that deathless fame which an unkind fate did not allow him to achieve for himself.

Time and Structure of In Memoriam.—The elegy is not one long, continuous poem, but rather a series of 131 short poems, with a prologue and an epilogue. These "short swallow-flights of song" are better adapted for the varying moods of sorrow

than is the "larger lay." It is psychologically impossible for a sane man to abide in the deepest grief; passion comes and goes; moods change; emotions are in waves; Hamlet indulges in jest even in his melancholy. Tennyson began writing *In Memoriam* soon after the death of Hallam, but the prologue was not written before 1849-50. Although this period covers seventeen years of time, the body of the poem was completed in about two years and seven months. Even a casual reading of the poem reveals the progress of the seasons: there are three springs, Cantos 38, 83, and 115–116; the three Christmases are celebrated in Cantos 28, 78, and 104–106; and the anniversary of Arthur's death is touched upon in Cantos 72 and 99.

The Philosophy of In Memoriam. — In the strictest sense there is no philosophy in the poem; Tennyson was not elaborating a philosophy as might a philosopher like Spinoza or Hegel; he was expressing the moods of his grief and his reflections upon life and progress in "measured language." But in a loose sense there is a philosophy in this poem. A thinker like Tennyson could not discuss the meaning of life and death without giving us his philosophy. One of the few really great questions that man has been asking for thousands of years is, "If a man die, shall he live again?" Tennyson does not answer this weighty question in the negative with the cocksureness of the materialist, nor, on the other hand, does he speak with the authority of one whom the Almighty has chosen to give an exclusive divine revelation. He feels like a child crying in the night,

> "And with no language but a cry."

But there is progress from gloom to faith; the poem makes for belief rather than for unbelief. After the first "Confusions of a wasted youth," there comes a serenity which embraces the "larger hope."

> "I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope
> And gather dust and chaff, and call
> To what I feel is Lord of all,
> And faintly trust the larger hope."

rofessor Henry Sedgwick, a man who subjected his faith to the ldest scrutiny, finds in the poem

> he indestructible and inalienable minimum of faith which humanity nnot give up because it is necessary for life; and which I know that I, least so far as the man in me is deeper than the methodical thinker, nnot give up."

Ideas on Evolution.—Wordsworth somewhere calls poetry the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge;" meaning possibly iat after the geologist and astronomer, the biologist and chemist, ave by frequent and painful processes of research and computaon found the crude facts, the poet selects the quintessence of eir labors and perpetuates the result in the form of imperishle art. This is what Tennyson has done in his *In Memoriam.* he first part of the nineteenth century was a period of bitter ontroversy between the theologian and the scientist; this unrest reflected in Tennyson's poem. It is not improbable that a ousand years hence the inquisitive reader of the history of ought in the early part of the nineteenth century will turn to *n Memoriam* for an understanding of that controversial period ather than to the formal records and histories of science.

It is well to remember that theology is just as much a science s is geology, and as a science it is subject to revision. As uman knowledge grows from more to more there needs to be readjustment. But theological ideas lend themselves to readustment more slowly than ideas on chemistry and geology, and is is eminently proper, for our ideas about theology ought to e conservative. It took centuries for our theological ideas to e readjusted to the Copernican system of astronomy; then geolgy caused another upheaval; and finally in Tennyson's time the ause of a new controversy was the biological idea.

Darwin's *Origin of Species* appeared ten years after the publiation of *In Memoriam,* and yet there are Darwinian ideas in ennyson's poem. This means that these ideas were in the air. t is necessary to recall that as a university man Tennyson assoiated with the brightest students of his time; that the "Apos-

tles," as they called themselves, engaged in frequent discussion of all manners of philosophical and scientific problems. The theory of evolution in rudimentary form, it has been pointed out, is as old as the theory of creation, but no other poet ever subdued these scientific ideas into such perfect artistic expression. As Andrew Lang points out,

> "Now it was part of the originality of Tennyson, as a philosophic poet, that he had brooded from boyhood on these early theories of evolution, in an age when they were practically unknown to the literary and were not patronized by the scientific world."

Tennyson was profoundly moved by these scientific theories, and at times he felt the foundations of his faith shaken, but he was never willing to accept a purely materialistic view of life. While accepting evolution as a theory, he never could abandon his early faith in a God of Love—

> "Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
> Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
> By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
> Believing where we cannot prove."

This introduction to the poem, written after he had brooded over his theme for many years, and after he had struggled through despair to peace, indicates the Christianity of the man. Tennyson's faith looked ahead rather than back; he thought it was more important to believe in the high destiny of man than to be confusedly constructing a theory as to his beginnings. He sings,

> . . . "Arise and fly
> The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
> Move upward, working out the beast,
> And let the ape and tiger die."

Adverse Criticism.—Kingsley called *In Memoriam* "the noblest Christian poem which several centuries have seen;" but, while the trend of critical opinion is in accord with Kingsley's high praise, not all critics have viewed this masterpiece in such a friendly light. The popular French critic, Taine, writes:

"His long poem, *In Memoriam,* written in praise and memory of a friend who died young, is cold, monotonous, and often too prettily arranged. He goes into mourning; but, like a gentleman, with brand-new gloves, wipes away his tears with a cambric handkerchief, and displays throughout the religious service, which ends the ceremony, all the compunctions of a respectful and well-trained layman."

This criticism we might dismiss with the reflection that this is the opinion of a foreigner whose spirit cannot enter into close sympathy with the moods and expression of an Englishman; but Frederic Harrison, an Englishman, made a similar remark when he wrote of the poem as having made "Tennyson the idol of the Anglican clergyman — the world in which he was born and the world in which his life was ideally passed — the idol of all cultured youth and of all aesthetic women."

Idylls of the King. — The four old cycles of stories around which the fancy of poets has played for many centuries are the Trojan war, the deeds of Alexander, the Arthurian romances, and the exploits of Charlemagne. The Arthurian legends have appealed especially to many of the English poets, among them the greatest, such as Milton and Spenser. The latter, when explaining to Sir Walter Raleigh his *Faerie Queene,* writes, "I labour to pourtrait in Arthure, before he was king, the image of a brave knight, perfected in the twelve morall vertues, as Aristotle hath devised." Milton once had in mind the writing of an Arthurian epic. In *Paradise Lost* he refers to

> . . . "what resounds
> In fable or romance of Uther's son,
> Begirt with British and Armoric knights."

And later, in *Paradise Regained,* he writes,

> "Of faery damsels met in forest wide
> By knights of Logres, or of Lyones,
> Lancelot, or Pelleas, or Pellenore."

The lesser English poets who have touched upon the theme are Drayton, Scott, Heber, and Sir Richard Blackmore, the last actually writing two long poems, *Prince Arthur* and *King Arthur,*

both of which have fortunately found that oblivion which dull ness and stupidity deserve. William Morris, Swinburne, Mat thew Arnold, Lowell, and Hovey are later poets who have foun inspiration in the story of the Table Round. But it is not o any of these that we are apt to think when we meet the names o Arthur and Guinevere, of Lancelot and Elaine, of Merlin an Vivien; it is of Tennyson, a name inseparably associated with th glory and renown of the knights of the Table Round.

The Arthurian Legend. — Among the first books printed b W. Caxton in the Abbey of Westminster was Malory's *Mort d'Arthur.* But Sir Thomas Malory was not the creator of th romances; they had been sung and written by many a prede cessor. The legends grouped themselves about five stories — th story of Arthur; that of the Mage Merlin; that of Lancelot, "th truest lover . . . that ever loved woman;" the story of th Grail; and that of Tristram and Iseult, "the first great love stor of the world." There likely was a real Arthur, "but an Arthu very different from the king of medieval romances or the idea monarch of Tennyson." He probably lived about the year 50 A.D. Geoffrey of Monmouth, who died in 1155, is not the firs writer to name King Arthur, for Nennius, a Welsh monk livin about the year 800, has the first extant mention of Arthur, but t Geoffrey credit is due for amplifying the story and starting th literary fame of the hero. Next come Wace and Layamon Wace portraying the magnificence of Arthur's court and intro ducing for the first time the Table Round. Wace was a Norma and wrote in French; Layamon turned the Norman account, th *Roman de Brut,* into English. Wace's story doubled Geoffrey' and Layamon's doubled Wace's. Chretien de Troies, the mos famous of French writers of Round Table stories, wrote si Arthurian poems, not one of which is found in the work o Geoffrey of Monmouth. He flourished in the twelfth centur Some critics, among them Professor Foerster, think him th greatest of all poets who have told the Arthurian romances, eve greater than Tennyson.

Sir Thomas Malory. — Malory was likely born about 140

e year in which Chaucer died, and lived until 1471. His great storical romance, the *Morte d'Arthur,* is original in plan and xecution. He is the first to make Arthur the central figure; ancelot and Guinevere are next in importance. Malory Angli- sed his Celtic — French material, as can be seen in the following escription of a beautiful English custom:

"So it befell the month of May, Queen Guinevere called unto her ights of the Table Round, and she gave them warning that early upon ie morrow she would ride on maying into woods and fields beside West- inster. 'And I warn you that there be none but that he be well horsed, id that ye all be clothed in green, either in silk, either in cloth, and I iall bring with me ten ladies, and every knight shall have a lady behind im, and every knight shall have a squire and two yeomen, and I will that e be all well horsed.' . . . And so upon the morn they took their horses, ith the queen, and rode on maying in woods and meadows, as it pleased iem, in great joy and delights. . . .

"So as the queen had mayed and all her knights all were bedashed ith herbs, mosses, and flowers, in the best manner and freshest." . . .

Malory, like Tennyson, fails to make Arthur a distinct and ndividualized character. His portrait of Queen Guinevere is etter.

"And there is Guinevere herself [writes Maynadier], who, were she nown nowhere else than in Malory's *Morte d'Arthur,* would be one of the reat epic queens of the world. . . . Proud and passionate, unreasonable her demands on Lancelot, vindictive. . . . She can be, and generally is, veetly gracious, womanly, and queenly. . . . And when finally shame and orrow came, she was not only courageous in her resistance of Mordred, ut also firmly self-sacrificing in her refusal to live her last days in love Joyous Gard with Lancelot."

Malory's book was widely read — the *Morte d'Arthur,* the nglish *Bible, Pilgrim's Progress,* and the *Book of Common rayer* including about all the English prose that has survived the eriod exceeding the time of Queen Anne. The *Morte d'Arthur,* spite of its frequent diffuseness, has a simplicity of narration nd a nobility of substance which have made it the imperishable ecord of the legends of the valorous knights of the Table Round.

The Composition.—The composition of the *Idylls of the King* extends over a long period in the long life of our poet. In 1859 under the title of *Idylls of the King,* appeared *Enid, Vivien, Elaine,* and *Guinevere;* but twenty-four years before this Edward Fitzgerald had seen in manuscript the *Morte d'Arthur,* and that Tennyson's fancy had long played about the legend is seen in the *Lady of Shalott,* which was first published in 1832, and in *Sir Lancelot and Guinevere,* and *Sir Galahad,* lyrics which, although not appearing until 1842, had been at least partly written in 1830. "The vision of Arthur as I have drawn him," said Tennyson to his son Hallam, "had come upon me when, little more than a boy, I first lighted upon Malory." So it may be said that the *Idylls of the King* were the life work of Tennyson at least no other topic occupied his mind and art over so long a period.

The Order of the Poems.—The order in which Tennyson wrote his *Idylls* is not the order in which they are to be read. As Van Dyke puts it:

> "that he should begin with the end, and continue with the beginning, and end with the middle of the story, and produce at last a poem which certainly has more special grandeur and completeness than anything that has been made in English since Milton died, is a thing so marvellous that no man would credit it save at the sword's point of fact."

This is the order of publication: First appeared the *Morte d'Arthur;* then in 1859 *Enid, Vivien, Elaine,* and *Guinevere;* in 1870 four more, *The Coming of Arthur, The Holy Grail, Pelleas and Ettarre,* and *The Passing of Arthur.* As an indication of how the volume of 1859 had whetted the public appetite, it may be observed that 40,000 copies of the new *Idylls* were ordered in advance. In 1872 came *Gareth and Lynette,* and *The Last Tournament;* and finally in 1885 the cycle was completed with *Balin and Balan.* Later editions contain slight changes in the titles. The order in which the poems are to be read is this: *The Coming of Arthur, Gareth and Lynette, The Marriage of Geraint, Geraint and Enid, Balin and Balan, Merlin and Vivien*

ancelot and Elaine, The Holy Grail, Pelleas and Ettarre, The ast Tournament, Guinevere, The Passing of Arthur.

Story and Purpose. — Each of the *Idylls* is a separate story nd can be enjoyed without any knowledge of the others, but yet here is a sequence which binds the *Idylls* into a unified whole. There is even a regular progression of seasons, for *Gareth and Lynette* has a spring setting while *Guinevere* is placed in the midst of winter. To put it in its simplest form, the story of the *dylls* is the story of a high-souled king who aimed to establish a oodly order of noble knights

> "Whose glory was redressing human wrong;
> Who spake no slander, no, nor listened to it;
> Who loved one only and who clave to her."

Every knight should be spotless in purity; dauntless in courage; onsecrated to the highest ideals. It is a beautiful ideal, but one doomed to failure in a world of imperfection. At first all is fair nd prosperous. The enthusiasm and magnanimity of the outhful Gareth overcome the petulence and pride of the peevish Lynette; the patient endurance of the meek Enid conquers the ealous suspicion of the rude Geraint; but in *Balin and Balan* the orces of evil are too strong, and henceforth evil overcomes good. Already in the story of *Enid* there is a hint of the evil that shall estroy the king's ideal.

> "It is the little rift within the lute
> That by and by will make the music mute,
> And ever widening slowly silence all."

The little rift within the lute is the love of Lancelot for Queen Guinevere — Lancelot, the goodliest, the bravest, the most human f all the knights that ever gathered about the Table Round, and Guinevere, the lovely Queen of Arthur himself. Long before Tennyson began the story of the knights of the Table Round his ancy had pictured in an exquisite lyric the early meeting of ancelot and Guinevere. In that lyric, in a few lines, Tennyson as indicated the cause of the downfall of Arthur's dream of a erfect order —

"A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole life in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips."

The first purpose of a narrative poet should be to tell h story well, artistically, beautifully, entertainingly. Tennyson wa primarily a poet, not a preacher, and yet morality and art are s interwoven that no great poet can produce so serious a work a the *Idylls* without introducing a moral element. In an epilogu to the poems Tennyson asks the Queen to

". . . accept this old imperfect tale
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with Soul."

This, then, is the moral purpose of the *Idylls,* to show the eterna struggle between the Sense and the Soul, between the flesh an the spirit, between the Real with its limitations and the Ideal tha strives to transcend the limitations of "this muddy vesture o decay." It is the same struggle as that indicated by the grea Apostle who confessed that when he would do good evil wa present with him.

Principal Characters. — In his delineation of character Tenny son has made the same mistake made by Milton in his *Paradis Lost.* Satan is the most entertaining and admirable character i Milton's great epic. So, too, Lancelot rather than King Arthu is the hero of the *Idylls.* King Arthur is not human enough. I his combats he wins too easily. In *Balin and Balan* we rea

"And Arthur lightly smote the brethren down,
And lightly so return'd, and no man knew."

This is not the art of a story teller who wishes us to thrill wit the uncertainties of our hero's fate. In *Guinevere,* when Kin Arthur finds his penitent Queen at Almsbury his grand mann approaches dangerously near to pedantry and Pharisaism; ou sympathy is with the woman grovelling at his feet, rather tha with the wronged husband, who in his egotism says,

"Lo, I forgive thee, as Eternal God
Forgives! do thou for thine own soul the rest."

his assumption of perfection helps us to appreciate Guinevere's aint, after her lord has left her in her misery:

> "I thought I could not breathe in that fine air,
> That pure severity of perfect light—
> I yearned for warmth and color which I found
> In Lancelot."

n *Maud* Tennyson has a fine line which is sometimes quoted as a haracterization of his King Arthur,

> "Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null."

o call Tennyson's Arthur "splendidly null" may be too severe a iticism, but had some of the "warmth and color" of Lancelot een transferred to the blameless king, we might have had a more felike portrait. A "touch of earth" would have humanized rthur, and we would have had a man instead of a cold, statue-ke, immortal being, a creature

> ". . . too bright and good
> For human nature's daily food."

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CHAPTER XXI

Browning

UNDOUBTEDLY the two poets of the latter half of the nineteenth century are Tennyson and Browning; each distinct in individuality, and each of that largeness of nature that enabled him to admire the greatness of the other. The poetry of Tennyson is characterized by a clearness of expression and a melodious smoothness of form that denote the artist's devotion to style; and the thought material of his early poetry is deeply tinged with the melancholy of one to whom life had become a painful mystery. On the other hand, Browning seems to the general public to pay scant attention to clearness or smoothness, and his poetry from the beginning has a hearty cheerfulness that repels those delicate natures that luxuriate in morbid emotionalism. Tennyson was by far the more popular of the two, although no Tennysonian has become the intense admirer and follower of his idol as has the true Browningite.

Birth and Parentage. — Robert Browning was born in Camberwell, a suburb of London, on May 7, 1812. His father was a man of delicate sensibility and charm, but of a robustness which fought sturdily in defence of the wronged and helpless. He was disinherited because of his anti-slavery sympathies. Although he made his living by the prosaic work of a trusted clerk in the Bank of England, he was passionately interested in art and literature. The wife was the daughter of William Wiedermann, a German merchant who had settled and married at Dundee. "She was a divine woman," is the poet's brief eulogy, while Carlyle called her "the type of a Scottish gentlewoman," which for him meant that she was a woman of refinement and dignity.

Early Education. — Browning never had much school education, although he attended an elementary school up to his fourteenth year, and later attended University College of London.

"If we test the matter by the test of actual schools and universi ties," writes one of his biographers, "Browning will appear t be one of the least educated men in English literary history But if we test it by the amount actually learned, we shall think that he was perhaps the most educated man that ever lived." Browning's father was full of an erudition of a varied sort taking little interest in contemporary politics, he lived in the past of Greek epics and medieval chronicles. In one of his poems Browning describes how, when a child, his father arranged the chairs in the drawing-room and called them the cities of Troy The boy himself, we may be sure, always entered into the game quest of knowledge with an avidity equal to the father's joy in imparting it. "He clamored for occupation from the moment he could speak." His chief childhood interest was in live pets. He gradually assembled a menagerie of owls and monkeys, magpies and hedgehogs, an eagle and snakes. He was uniformly kind to his pet animals, and through life we find him a champion of the brute creation.

The best part of his bookish education he picked up in his father's miscellaneous library where he browsed at will, absorbing all he touched. His first poetic impulses were inspired by the romantic and fiery outpourings of Ossian, which he read only in extracts. "The first composition I ever was guilty of," he wrote to Elizabeth Barrett in 1846, "was something in imitation of Ossian." And at another time he said that Ossian "was the first book I ever bought in my life." Then the boy was captivated by the grandiose and at times grand poetry of the fierce Byron. His enthusiasm for Byron diminished as the years went by, but he never lost all of his admiration of the poet so different from himself in many ways and yet so similar in the abounding vitality of his genius.

Then came the influence of Shelley and Keats. When a boy of fourteen he made a casual discovery of "Mr. Shelley's Athe istical poem." His parents were sympathetic and broad enough to encourage the son in his liking for the poetry of both Shelley and Keats. The spiritual content of Shelley, the romantic charm

If Keats touched the depths in the soul of this growing boy who felt his affinity with their souls. In *Memorabilia,* a poem composed about 1854, we have a beautiful tribute to Shelley.

So too in *Pauline* we have a fine burst of admiration for this poet who stirred the young soul of the banker's son. Later in life Mr. Browning wrote to Dr. Furnivall, "For myself, I painfully contrast my notions of Shelley the *man* and Shelley, well, even the poet, with what they were sixty years ago."

Early Poems. — *Pauline* bears the date of October 22, 1832; it was printed the following year. It is a poem of 1031 lines of blank verse. Browning was never very proud of this early production, as we find in his apology in the preface of the first collected edition of his works — "The first piece in the series, I acknowledge and retain with extreme repugnance." Pauline contains the confession of a young poet to the woman he loves; it is full of passionate yearnings and a vague unrest. "The speaker appears to us a highly-gifted and on the whole right-natured man, but possessed of a morbid self-consciousness and a limitless yet indecisive ambition." The following passage illustrates the passionate aspiration of the poet:

> "My God, my God, let me for once look on thee
> As though naught else existed, we alone!
> And as creation crumbles, my soul's spark
> Expands till I can say — Even from myself
> I need thee, and I feel thee and I love thee."

Browning's attitude toward the growth and development of his soul is well characterized in these lines:

> "Souls alter not, and mine must still advance;
> . . . . . .
> I cannot chain my soul: it will not rest
> In its clay prison, this most narrow sphere:
> It has strange impulse, tendency, desire,
> Which nowise I account for nor explain."

In *Paracelsus* Browning makes his introduction to the public, for *Pauline* had been published anonymously. It appeared in 1835. Between the writing of *Pauline* and *Paracelsus* the young

poet had made a journey to Russia, having been invited to accompany the Russian consul-general. The visit left no immediate traces in the work of Browning, but undoubtedly had its influence in broadening a mind eager to absorb all knowledge.

Paracelsus is a long poem divided into five acts, or parts, for although the poem is arranged in dramatic form it is not a drama, but rather a poem in dialogue in which the hero discourses with his three friends Festus, Michal, and Aprile. Like Goethe's Faust and Shelley's Alastor, Paracelsus is the representative of the ambitious and restless few who would grasp all knowledge; in this case, not for self-glorification or for the sake of knowing,

> "But to become a star to men forever."

In contrast to Paracelsus who thinks the ultimate good is knowledge, we have the Italian poet, Aprile, who places love as the supreme end of life. To some Aprile suggests Shelley, but he is not to be identified with Shelley, though he has

> "unmistakably Shelleyan traits, and the dreamy pageant of his imaginary creations might stand for a summary review of Shelley's work. Had Shelley lived, he might have come nearer than anyone else to fulfilling the rounded and complete ideal of which Paracelsus and Aprile were dissevered halves." *

The lofty character of the theme and Browning's own affinity with the aspiring Paracelsus produce some magnificent poetry.

> "Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
> From outward things, whate'er you may believe.
> There is an inmost center in us all,
> Where truth abides in fulness; and around,
> Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
> This perfect, clear perception — which is truth.
> A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
> Binds it and makes all error: and TO KNOW
> Rather consists in opening out a way
> Whence the imprisoned splendor may escape,
> Than in effecting entry for a light
> Supposed to be without."

* C. H. Herford.

The poem has many short quotable sayings, such as:

"And men have oft grown old among their books
To die case-hardened in their ignorance."

"Make no more giants, god,
But elevate the race at once!"

"At worst I have performed my share of the task:
The rest is God's concern."

"No mean trick
He left untried, and truly well-nigh wormed
All traces of God's finger out of him."

"But though I cannot soar, I do not crawl."

"If I stoop
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
Close to my breast; its splendor, soon or late,
Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge one day."

The poem has four lyrics, one of which to me suggests Keats; t is a strange song of old spices and "haunts the brain like a erfume."

"Heap cassia, sandal-buds and stripes
Of labdanum, and aloe-balls
Smeared with dull nard an Indian wipes
From out her hair: such balsam falls
Down sea-side mountain pedestals,
From tree-tops where tired winds are fain,
Spent with the vast and howling main,
To treasure half their island-gain.

"And strew faint sweetness from some old
Egyptian's fine worm-eaten shroud
Which breaks to dust when once unrolled;
Or shredded perfume, like a cloud
From closet long to quiet vowed,
With mothed and dropping arras hung,
Mouldering her lute and books among,
As when a queen, long dead, was young."

Pippa Passes.—Before writing *Pippa Passes* Browning had ritten *Strafford,* an historical tragedy, and *Sordello,* a very long

poem. Although the tragedy was acted by Mr. Macready, it was but a partial success; *Sordello* has always been considered the most difficult of Browning poems. *Pippa Passes,* published in 1841, is generally considered his most perfect piece of work, and it is pleasant to know that it is the most popular also. It is a dramatic poem made up of an Introduction, Morning, Noon, Evening, and Night. It is a story of the unconscious influence of a pure-minded and sweet-souled girl, Pippa, the silk-mill girl of Asolo, who in the unaffected enjoyment of her one holiday in the whole year walks about the streets singing her message into the lives of the grand people who she imagines are far removed from her and her life. Mrs. Sutherland Orr is authority for giving this account of the inception of this idea:

"Mr. Browning was walking alone in a wood near Dulwich, when the image flashed upon him of some one walking thus alone through life; one apparently too obscure to leave a trace of his or her passage, yet exercising a lasting though unconscious influence at every step of it; and the image shaped itself into the little silk-winder of Asolo, Felippa, or Pippa:

'The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!'"

The Dramas.—In addition to the dramas we have named he wrote *King Victor and King Charles:* a tragedy, 1842; *The Return of the Druses:* a tragedy in five acts, 1843; *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon:* a tragedy in three acts, 1843; *Colombe's Birthday:* a play in five acts, 1844; *A Soul's Tragedy,* 1846; *Luria:* a tragedy in five acts, 1846; *In a Balcony,* written in 1853 and published in *Men and Women* in 1855.

Of these the general reader will likely be most interested in *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon, Colombe's Birthday,* and *In a Balcony.*

A Blot in the 'Scutcheon was written in five days; it is con-

sidered by some the "simplest, and perhaps the deepest and finest of Browning's plays." When first acted it took strong hold upon the public, even the gallery growing enthusiastic in its appreciation. The heroine is Mildred, a very young girl — it has been noted that Browning's heroines like Shakspere's are always young — whose sin together with her brother's misunderstanding of her conduct brings a tragic death to the three principal characters. In its gloomy effect the play suggests Othello. Dickens wrote to a friend, "I know nothing that is so affecting, nothing in any book I have ever read, as Mildred's recurrence to that 'I was so young — I had no mother.'" On the other hand Professor Lounsbury once wrote of this play, "It is simply impossible to conceive rational beings in real life conducting themselves with so thorough a disregard of ordinary sense."

In *Colombe's Birthday* we move in a less oppressive atmosphere. Here we have the story of a young ruler, Colombe of Ravenstein, Duchess of Juliers and Cleves, who enters upon her birthday, which happens to be also the first anniversary of her rule, with pleasant anticipations of a joyous day. Before the day is ended she finds that Prince Berthold is the true heir. The flattering courtiers of her prosperity fail her in her need, but Valence, the hero of the play, who has come to the court to present the wrongs of his townsmen, becomes her champion and reveals his love. Berthold, who is to be the great ruler of an empire some day, sees in the gracious and womanly Colombe a woman who would grace an emperor's throne, and he accordingly offers marriage, both as a solution to the question as to who should possess the duchy and as a greater field for Colombe's talents. Shall Colombe lose a throne or gain the love of a lifetime? She gives up Juliers and the world and takes love. In writing of the character of Colombe, Arthur Symons says:

"The gay girlishness of the young Duchess, her joyousness and generous light heart; her womanliness, her earnestness, her clear, deep noble nature, attract us from her first words, and leave us, after the hour we have spent in her presence, with a memory like that of some woman whom we have met, for an hour or a moment, in the world or in books."

In a Balcony is the last of his poems having the purely dramatic form. It is more of a dialogue than a play; there are but three characters — Norbert, Constance, and the Queen. Norbert and Constance are lovers. Norbert is a straightforward, noble character; Constance is more subtle, prone to believe that deception, or diplomacy, will win better results than directness. Constance fears that the Queen will object to her marriage with Norbert, and urges Norbert to flatter and compliment the Queen by insinuating that he asks for the hand of Constance because he would not dare to aspire to the hand of the Queen herself. The Queen, half-starved for love in her lonely splendor, grasps at love when she thinks Norbert is offering his own devotion. She who had abjured the hope of love and loving is wild with the delight of a new and sweeter life. Then she is disillusioned by the sturdy honesty of Norbert, who spurns the suggestion of Constance that he marry the Queen. The play has somewhat of a *The Lady or the Tiger* ending, but we infer that the footsteps of the guards sound the death of the two lovers.

The Ring and the Book. — This poem is one of the longest poems ever written, having no fewer than 20,988 lines in the twelve books comprising the poem. As long as is *Don Juan,* this is longer by more than five thousand lines. But not only by reason of its length is this a remarkable poem, it is also the "greatest achievement of the century in blank verse." It is also one of the most daring adventures in story-telling, for the poet tells the same story ten different times, and keeps up the interest to the end.

"The method thus adopted [writes Arthur Symons] is at once absolutely original and supremely difficult. To tell the same story, without mere repetition, no less than ten times over, to make each telling at once the same and new, a record of the same facts but of independent impressions, to convey by means of each monologue a sense of the speaker not less vivid and lifelike than by the ordinary dramatic method, . . . to fuse and mould all these parts into one living whole is, as a *tour de force,* unique, and it is not only a *tour de force. The Ring and the Book* . . . must be ranked among the greatest poems in our literature; it has a spiritual insight, human science, dramatic and intellectual and moral force, a

strength and grip, a subtlety, a range and variety of genius and of knowledge, hardly to be paralleled outside of Shakspere."

The Material. — Browning found his material, the raw stuff upon which to try his poetic art, in an old square yellow book which he bought for eightpence at a second-hand stall in Florence, one day in June, 1865. The book was about:

> "A Roman murder-case:
> Position of the entire criminal cause
> Of Guido Franceschini, nobleman,
> With certain four, the cut-throats in his pay,
> Tried, all five, and found guilty and put to death
> By heading or hanging as befitted ranks,
> At Rome on February Twenty Two,
> Since our salvation Sixteen Ninety Eight:
> Wherein it is disputed if, and when,
> Husbands may kill adulterous wives, yet 'scape
> The customary forfeit."

Put in this bald way the story seems common and sordid enough, and a true poet is needed to glorify such commonplace. When Homer smote his lyre he sang of Achilles, the most glorious and warlike of youth, and of Helen whose beauty caused the old men on the walls of Troy to stare as she passed; Virgil chooses the story of the founding of a great empire in Italy; Milton turns back to the Garden of Eden and describes the fall of man — but Browning takes a sordid and paltry story from an old book on a second-hand stall, and by the gift of his genius glorifies the commonplace.

This in brief is the story he found: At the age of thirteen, Pompilia, the supposed daughter of Pietro and Violante Comparini, is married to Count Guido Franceschini, a poor nobleman fifty years of age. Guido expects to profit by a large dowry; Violante expects the advantages of aristocratic society. But both parties are deceived, for Guido is not the richer by the marriage, nor is Violante advanced socially. Pompilia, who has been a passive instrument in the hands of the schemers, is the sufferer. Shortly before she is to become a mother she escapes from the villainous persecutions of her husband through the aid of Capon-

sacchi, a young priest. A fortnight after the birth of his heir, Guido with four cut-throats steals to the little home of the Comparini where Pompilia has taken refuge and murders his wife and the two Comparini. Guido is caught and tried. His wife lives long enough to give her version of the story. The question at issue is this: Was Guido justified in his act because of the deception of the Comparini and the conduct of Pompilia? The court decides that he is guilty and that Pompilia is innocent of wrong. The case is appealed to the Pope, who confirms the decree of the court.

The Speakers.—The first book is called *The Ring and the Book,* and the last is *The Book and the Ring;* the one might be called the prologue, the other the epilogue of the dramatic recital. The other ten books are ten individualized monologues told by nine different persons, one of whom, Guido, speaks twice. *Half-Rome, The Other Half-Rome,* and *Tertium Quid* represent the various phases of public opinion. In *Half-Rome* the speaker takes the side of the wronged husband as he tells the story from his point of view; his language is vivid and half-humorous in its sarcasm. Before we are through with his story we learn that he is jealous

> "Of a certain what's his name and jackanapes
> Somewhat too civil of eyes with lute and song
> About a house here, where I keep a wife."

The monologist in *The Other Half-Rome* takes the side of the wife—

> "Little Pompilia, with the patient brow
> And lamentable smile on those poor lips,"

and condemns Guido. *The Other Half-Rome* is the voice of a bachelor who is possibly influenced by the beauty of Pompilia. His discourse is in a more dignified style than that of the first speaker. These two speakers with their personal bias are typical of the attitude of society in any dispute. Then comes the monologue of "Tertium Quid," the third somebody, who represents

hat small superior class which prides itself on its impartiality, r perhaps its indifference. He will not take sides, but by his leverness and ingenuity will show that both sides are wrong nd both are right.

Now come the three important actors in the case who give in he next three books their version of what is truth. First comes *Count Guido Franceschini,* the book in which Guido defends his ourse and seeks justification for his act. He makes the most of he deception of Violante in passing off Pompilia as her daughter, nd draws dark inferences from his wife's escape with Caponsacchi. In the first book Browning has given us a wonderful picture of the criminal of acute mind nervously pleading his own case:

> "Soft-cushioned sits he; yet shifts seat, shirks touch,
> As, with a twitchy brow and wincing lip,
> And cheek that changes to all kinds of white,
> He proffers his defence, in tones subdued
> Near to mock-mildness now, . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> And never once does he detach his eye
> From those ranged there to slay him or to save,
> But does his best man's-service for himself."

In the next book, *Giuseppe Caponsacchi,* we have the speech of he chivalrous priest who assisted Pompilia to escape from the ome of her husband. A critic thinks this monologue contains 'such fire, such pathos, such splendor of human speech" as has ot been written since the English verse of Webster. His speech is a passionate and convincing defence of Pompilia, and also a confession of how his life had been redeemed from the idle riflings of a favored young priest by his glimpse into the purity of Pompilia's soul. The seventh book contains the story as told by he young wife, Pompilia, as she lies dying in the hospital. Pompilia is the finest woman that Browning has created, and like Pippa, and Aprile, and Shakspere's Miranda, and Juliet, is a very young woman, a mere girl. Strange as it may seem, in describing he simple and illiterate Pompilia Browning is likely thinking of is "lyric love," Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who had died after

the first conception of the poem. Browning knew his wife to be rich in spiritual insight, in ability to reach truth without the formal processes of logic; such is his Pompilia, who although without learning knew the way to the heart of truth. She is the one central force who by simply being true to the guiding light of her own nature turns the worldly priest into a saint,

"compels a cynical society to believe in spiritual love, and wins even from the husband who bought her and hated her and slew her the confession of his last desperate cry —

"Pompilia, will you let them murder me?"

No quoted extract from the *Ring and the Book* does justice to the poem, but I cannot refrain from including these lines from the conclusion of Pompilia's speech:

"O lover of my life, O soldier saint,
No work begun shall ever pause for death!
Love will be helpful to me more and more
I' the coming course, the new path I must tread.
. . . . . .
. . . My fate
Will have been hard for even him to bear:
Let it confirm him in the trust of God,
Showing how holily he dared the deed!
And — for the rest — say from the deed, no touch
Of harm came, but all good, all happiness,
Not one faint fleck of failure! Why explain?
What I see, oh, he sees and how much more!
Tell him — I know not wherefore the true word
Should fade and fall unuttered at the last —
It was the name of him I sprang to meet
When came the knock, the summons and the end.
'My great heart, my strong hand are back again!'
I would have sprung to these, beckoning across
Murder and hell gigantic and distinct
O' the threshold, posted to exclude me heaven:
He is ordained to call and I to come!
. . . . . .
. . . He is a priest;
He cannot marry therefore, which is right:
I think he would not marry if he could,

Marriage on earth seems such a counterfeit,
Mere imitation of the inimitable:
In heaven we have the real and true and sure,
'Tis there they neither marry nor are given
In marriage but are as the angels: right,
Oh, how right that is, how like Jesus Christ
To say that! Marriage-making for the earth,
With gold so much — birth, power, repute so much,
Or beauty, youth so much, in lack of these!
Be as the angels rather, who, apart,
Know themselves into one, are found at length
Married, but marry never, no, nor give
In marriage; they are man and wife at once
When the true time is: here we have to wait
Not so long neither! Could we by a wish
Have what we will and get the future now,
Would we wish aught done undone in the past?
So, let him wait God's instant men call years;
Meantime hold hard by truth and his great soul,
Do out the duty! Through such souls alone
God stooping shows sufficient of His light
For us i' the dark to rise by. And I rise."

The eighth book contains the speech of Dominus Hyacinthus le Archangelis, who defends Guido; the ninth contains the defence of the conduct of Pompilia by Bottinius. These two lawyers make speeches that the average reader finds tedious and unintelligible. But Mr. Chesterton thinks the introduction of these two speeches is one of the finest and most artistic strokes in the whole poem. The lawyers may typify that class of partisans who are continually engaged in defending each cause by entirely inappropriate arguments."

In the tenth book we have the soliloquy of Pope Innocent XII, to whom the case has been referred. In thoughtful dignity and quiet sadness the Pope reviews the whole case, coming to the opinion that Pompilia was faultless, that Caponsacchi is deserving of praise, and that Guido must meet the death penalty. In the eleventh book we have the final speech of the terrified Guido. In his first speech he used craft and cunning, making a brave show of innocence; in this he is hopeless and frenzied.

"He pours out on his awe-stricken listeners [says Mr. Symons] a wild flood of entreaty, defiance, ghastly and anguished humor, flattery, satire, raving blasphemy and foaming impenitence."

Then to round and complete the poem we have *The Book and the Ring* as epilogue, a book in which an account is given of the execution of Guido, also extracts from a sermon on Pompilia, some words about the son's inheritance of the property, and a repetition of the thought that fact may be falsity and fancy truth.

"Here were the end, had anything an end."

Meaning of the Ring and the Book.—Every work of art, whether poem or picture, symphony or statue, should have as many meanings as there are minds to interpret. To say that *Hamlet* means one particular thing is to misread Shakspere; so, too, with *The Ring and the Book*. Some read into the poem the great lesson of the supremacy of the individual over circumstances, as is illustrated by the character of Pompilia. Others see that Browning wished to show that great institutions like the church are unable to serve society, for whenever Pompilia turned to the church for help, the church failed her. Still others say the poem illustrates the "infinities of spiritual good and evil a current and sordid story may contain." Browning himself saw in the poem, as he tells us in his concluding lines:

"This lesson, that our human speech is naught,
Our human testimony false, our fame
And human estimation words and wind.
Why take the artistic way to prove so much?
Because, it is the glory and good of Art,
That art remains the one way possible
Of speaking truth, to mouths like mine at least."

To me a great lesson in the poem is that truth is many-sided; that before coming to a decision all the evidence should be heard; that "every one's point of view is interesting, even if it be a jaundiced or blood-shot point of view." In the words of Browning:

"Fancy with fact is just one fact the more."

Browning and Elizabeth Barrett. — There is no more beautiful ve story in the history of English literature than that relating to e courtship and marriage of Robert Browning and Elizabeth rrett. In 1844 Browning, on returning from Italy, found that e public was much interested in the poetry of Miss Barrett. one of her poems he read this reference to himself:

> Or at times a modern volume, Wordsworth's solemn-thoughted idyll,
> Howitt's ballad verse, or Tennyson's enchanted reverie —
> Or from Browning some 'Pomegranate,' which, if cut deep down the middle,
> Shows a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity."

hrough the kindly interest of John Kenyon, her cousin and his iend, the two poets were brought into "actual communication, d the memorable correspondence, the most famous of its kind English literature, at once began." Browning impetuously gins, "I love your verses, my dear Miss Barrett, with all my art."

Miss Barrett, however, for a long time discouraged the idea a meeting; she was too much of an invalid, she thought, to ake new acquaintances. When a young girl she had injured r spine when she was riding. Her father's affection for her anifested itself in a despotic solicitude which enveloped the hole household in a dismal gloom. Elizabeth herself believed at she was dying. Nothing but the buoyancy of her own viva- ous nature kept her from becoming a hypochondriac. Her tive mind busied itself with Æschylus and Euripides, and with e great public questions of the day. From the bondage and oom of her invalid's room in her father's house on Wimpole reet she was rescued by Robert Browning, who saw that the ly way to save her from death itself was by marrying her.

In September, 1846, they were quietly married in a church in arylebone; after the ceremony Mrs. Browning returned to her me as though nothing had happened. Between the marriage d the elopement Robert did not call at the house on Wimpole reet, because he was not going to ask the maid who might come

to the door whether Miss Barrett (who now was Mrs. Browning) was disengaged.

"At length the equivocal and exhausting interregnum was over. Mr Browning went for the second time almost on tiptoe out of her father's house, accompanied only by her maid and her dog, which was only just successfully prevented from barking. Before the end of the day in all probability Barrett had discovered that his daughter had fled with Browning to Italy."

In passing judgment upon this elopement it must be remembered that this Romeo was thirty-four years old while the Juliet of the romance was six years older. While Mrs. Browning never did have the robust health of a sturdy woman, her transformation from the invalidism of her father's home to the active life she enjoyed for the next fifteen years suggests the miraculous. It is no mere fiction that leads her to write in that magnificent first sonnet *From the Portuguese:*

"I thought once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:
And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,
'Guess now who holds thee?' — 'Death!' I said. But, there,
The silver answer rang, . . . 'Not Death, but Love.'"

In Italy. — Even the superficial student knows that Browning was intensely interested in Italy.

"Open my heart, and you will see
Graved inside of it, 'Italy.'
Such lovers old are I and she:
So it always was, so shall ever be!"

his own testimony in one of his early lyrics. His intimate acquaintance with Italian art, history, contemporary politics and life, is revealed on almost every page from *Sordello* to *Asolando*. To his gifted mind the intricacies of the struggles between Guelf and Ghibelline presented no difficulties; to his broad sympathies the fervent nineteenth century strivings after Italian nationality made a strong appeal. His interest in Italy was not that of the cultured man of the world who looks upon that country as a romantic playground, or a rich museum of antiquities; his interest was in the living Italy struggling to evolve a homogenous national life. Four of his seven dramas deal with some phase of Italian political life. *Luria* has for its central event a war in the fifteenth century, the century of the Medicis, between Florence and Pisa; *A Soul's Tragedy* is the story of a political revolt in the sixteenth century; *King Victor and King Charles* takes us into the life of the eighteenth century (although this play is based less upon pure imagination than the preceding two, the historical events are used mainly as a background for the study of the soul-development of the four characters); in the dialogue between Luigi and his mother in *Pippa Passes* we are introduced into the revolutionary atmosphere of the nineteenth century; Luigi is a young Carbonaro, eager to deliver Italy from oppression through revolt; the mother represents the conservative element that delays progress. *The Ring and the Book,* from beginning to end, is steeped in Italian influence; of the shorter poems revealing Browning's knowledge of the social life in Italy we have *My Last Duchess, Ferenciaja,* and *In a Gondola. Pietro of Albano* and *A Grammarian's Funeral* show his knowledge of the Italian scholar; while *Andrea del Sarto, Fra Lippo Lippi, Pictor Ignotus,* and *Old Pictures in Florence* suggest his intimate acquaintance with art and artists.

His England. — Browning's relation to the life of England is not so personal and intimate as is that of Tennyson. When one thinks of the latter poet at once there come to his mind such short patriotic poems as the *Charge of the Light Brigade* and the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington;* while *The Princess,*

In Memoriam, and *The Idylls of the King* are as thoroughly English as *The Ring and the Book* is thoroughly Italian. Yet it would be a grave mistake to infer that Browning was other than an English poet. He was much indebted to English literature and English institutions. Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, and Shakspere are the poets whom he especially mentions in his writings. He refers to Keats in *Popularity;* with poor taste, perhaps, he takes Wordsworth to task in *The Lost Leader,* a reference of which he afterwards thinks with "something of shame and contrititon," for it is hardly fair to Wordsworth. In *At the Mermaid, House,* and *Shop,* he, a great poet, gives us some of his ideas concerning the greatest English poet Shakspere. *Bishop Blougram's Apology, Christmas Eve,* and *Easter Day* are expositions of the tendencies of nineteenth century religious thought; English social life is touched upon in *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon,* and *The Album Inn;* the short poems *Martin Relph, Clive, Ned Bratts,* and *Halbert and Hob* are distinctively English. The drama *Strafford* treats of that critical period in English history when Charles I meets his unfortunate end. This is a play in which the intense liberalism of Browning found pleasure in giving expression to his sympathy with the eternal struggle of the people against a foolish and headstrong monarchy, yet it is significant that the hero of the drama is Strafford, the king's devoted friend, and not Pym, the leader of the people. In *Home-Thoughts, From Abroad* we have Browning's own heartfelt expression of his love for his native land —

"Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there,
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,
That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf
Round the elm-tree bole are in tiny leaf,
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
In England — now!

"And after April, when May follows,
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!

Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
Blossoms and dewdrops — at the bent spray's edge —
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
Lest you should think he never could recapture
The first fine careless rapture!
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
The buttercups, the little children's dower —
Far brighter than this gaudy melon's flower!"

Subsequent Years. — His wife died in 1861; he lived for twenty-eight years more, doing a man's work with that undaunted optimism which is ever ready to

"Greet the unseen with a cheer."

It were idle to say that the death of his wife was not a terrible blow; his universe, when filled with the living spirit of his Lyric Love, so complete and perfect, was now a shattered world; but it was not a hopeless, dead world. "I shall grow still, I hope," he wrote to Miss Haworth, a month after his loss, "but my root is taken, and remains." He could not desecrate the memory of his wife by a demonstration of his grief, nor could he violate the sacredness of his own nature by eating his heart away in morbid seclusion. He abandoned Florence, never to revisit it, and went to London, where he took lodgings at first, and then settled in a house in Warwick Crescent, which became his home for the next twenty-five years. From this retreat he made frequent trips, spending months in France and Switzerland, and in 1878 began revisiting Italy.

His life in London brought him in touch with many of the most distinguished men and women of his time; he soon numbered among his friends such literary men as Thackeray, Ruskin, Tennyson, Carlyle, and Rossetti. In 1864 appeared his *Dramatis Personae,* a volume creating a group of enthusiastic readers, especially among the younger men at the universities. In the poems of this volume, "The sense of tragic loss broods over all its music. In lyric strength and beauty there is no decay, but

the dramatic imagination has certainly lost somewhat of its flexible strength and easy poise of wing."* His own mood is that of James Lee's wife—

"Ah, Love! but a day
And the world has changed!
The sun's away,
And the bird estranged;
The wind has dropped;
And the sky's deranged:
Summer has stopped."

In *Dramatis Personae* are such poems as *Abt Vogler, Rabbi Ben Ezra, A Death in the Desert, Caliban upon Setebos,* and *Prospice.* It is not hard to understand how such strikingly original poems would attract much attention from a generation accustomed to the polished idylls of a Tennyson and the simple ballads of a Wordsworth. The originality of *Caliban* is Shaksperean in conception and its brutal realism outdoes Zola. The popular taste has found greatest delight in the great song put in the mouth of the old Rabbi, a song vibrant with the passion of the noblest idealism, and in the almost inspired expression of Abt Vogler, the old Catholic musician whom Browning uses to express his own unequivocal faith that

"All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist."

In *Prospice,* which we give in its entirety, we have both the noblest defiance to the arch-enemy of mankind, and a most tender reference to his Lyric Love.

"Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin, and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place,
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe;
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form,
Yet the strong man must go:

*C. H. Herford.

For the journey is done and the summit attained,
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle's to fight ere the guerdon be gained,
The reward of it all.
I was ever a fighter, so — one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes, and forbore,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers
The heroes of old,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness, and cold.
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minute's at end,
And the elements's rage, the fiend-voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breast,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest!"

After *The Ring and the Book* came a swift succession of voluminous verse such as *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau, Fifine at the Fair, Red Cotton Night-Cap Country, The Inn Album, Pacchiarotto, The Agammenon of Æschylus, La Saisiaz, Dramatic Idylls, Jocoseria, Ferishtah's Fancies, Parleyings,* and *Asolando.* These and the poems we have already named, together with *Balaustion's Adventure,* and *Aristophanes' Apology,* comprise the works of this prolific poet. Lack of space prevents even the briefest description of these works. Let it suffice to say that while many of these poems display a vast fund of erudition and an abounding vitality and undimmed vigor, there is yet lacking the elasticity and passionate crispness, the "first fine careless rapture" of his earlier work. However, in his last publication, *Asolando,* there are poems like *Summum Bonum,* and *A Pearl, A Girl* which have all the lightness and beauty of his lyric youth. It is hard to believe that a man nearing fourscore could write like a youth of twenty.

To the last he was full of hopes and plans for the future. "Shall I whisper to you my ambition and my hope?" he asked

a friend. "It is to write a tragedy better than anything I have done yet. I think of it constantly." This was at Asolo in the autumn of 1889. By the first of November he was again living with his son in the Palazzo Rezzonico in Venice. Near the end of the month he returned from a visit to the Lido with a bronchial cold. He still had in mind a trip to England, but his Italian physician who was summoned on the first of December found his heart in a weak condition. He died as the clocks in Venice were striking ten, on December 12, 1889. His end was peaceful. "My father," wrote the son, "died without pain or suffering other than that of weakness or weariness." He was buried in Westminster Abbey, where he lies in Poets' Corner by the side of his great contemporary, Tennyson.

Browning and Nature. — His treatment of nature differs from that of his great contemporaries, Wordsworth and Tennyson, as well as from that of his immediate predecessors, Shelley and Keats. He never endows nature with a spirit of its own, but keeps nature and humanity distinctly apart. He never loses himself in ecstatic description of natural objects, or contrasts personal pain with flower, or bird, or cloud. He catches distinctly, however,

> "The beauty and the wonder and the power,
> The shapes of things — their colors, lights, and shades,"

and uses them as a background for humanity. When some one asked him,

"You do not love nature, do you?"

"Yes," was the quick reply, "but I love humanity more."

The brief landscape, the lightning play of color, the power of letting us glimpse what is important by graphic word and subtle suggestion, are in their way daring and original. The color and swift ardor of his verse etch certain Italian scenes and cities into the memory of the reader. He loved the flowers and mountains and marble of Italy. He is also the poet of bird and insect, as well as of the larger animal life. He describes inimitably the "first fine careless rapture" of the thrush, and pays noble tribute

to the majestic eagle that so well typifies his own strong, fearless nature. The "contumacious grasshopper" does not escape him. He sings of the intelligence of the dog "Tray," and describes the form, spirit, and power of horses with the force of a Bonheur. Who can forget the wild lynx in *Karshish,* or the grotesque animal forms in *Childe Roland?* Caliban names in rapid order the animals that come under the observation of his acute and unreflecting mind. In *Saul,* a poem perhaps above all others revealing Browning's attitude toward nature, are pictured the animals of the desert, the field, and the wilderness.

Characteristics. — First we note in Browning a virility that calls to the heroic in our nature; as a critic in commenting on the obscurity of *Childe Roland* says, "Browning's chief virtue is that he makes one feel willing to blow horns and wave banners and lead forlorn hopes." He lacks artistic finish, his sentences do not always lend themselves as exercises in grammatical analysis, but his thought has the tonic quality of the salt sea.

> "Then, welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough,
> Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!"

He is full of the joy of life and living, but he never looks upon weakness and effeminacy with soft indulgence.

> "I count life just a stuff
> To try the soul's strength on."

Cowardice is the cardinal sin; weakness the only thing to fear. In the Epilogue placed at the end of his complete works we find this verse:

> "One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
> Never doubted clouds would break,
> Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
> Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
> Sleep to wake."

His *obscurity* is a quality that has occasioned almost endless discussion. In the early days Frederick Tennyson wrote of

Browning's poetry as "Chinese puzzles, trackless labyrinths, unapproachable nebulosities." Mr. Chesterton gives an amusing illustration of how the poet's mind worked in unusual forms of expression. He says that if Browning were describing so simple a thing as a man being knocked downstairs by another to whom he had given the lie he might write,

> "What then? 'You lie' and doormat below stairs
> Takes bump from back."

It is useless to deny that he is often obscure. This is referred to by the poet himself in his preface to the First Series of *Selections* from his works,

> "I can have little doubt that my writing has been in the main too hard for many I should have been pleased to communicate with; but I never designedly tried to puzzle people, as some of my critics have supposed. On the other hand, I never pretended to offer such literature as should be a substitute for a cigar or a game of dominoes to an idle man. So, perhaps, on the whole, I get my deserts, and something over — not a crowd, but a few I value more."

This obscurity is due to the amazing resourcefulness of his mind, a mind so full of knowledge easily acquired that it was hard for him, an essentially modest man, to realize that other minds were not so well equipped; then it was also due to his method, the dramatic method of assuming to speak in the person of some one else. He had the power of entering so intimately into the life and environment of his character that to him explanations seemed superfluous. As is well known, his favorite method is that of the dramatic monologue; having assumed the personality of another his imagination works so rapidly that frequently the poet leaves his reader far in the rear.

Another characteristic is his *universality*. By this I mean the wide range of topics and characters covered by his poems. Ancient, medieval, and modern times; the Orient and the Occident — all are touched upon with the intimate acquaintance of an expert.

"The men and women [writes Mr. Symons] who live and move in that new world of his creation are as varied as life itself; they are kings and beggars, saints and lovers, great captains, poets, painters, musicians, priests and popes, Jews, gipsies and dervishes, street-girls, princesses, dancers with the wicked witchery of the daughter of Herodias, wives with the devotion of the wife of Brutus, joyous girls and malevolent grey-beards, statesmen, cavaliers, soldiers of humanity, tyrants and bigots, ancient sages and modern spiritualists, heretics, scholars, scoundrels, devotees, rabbis, persons of quality and men of low estate, men and women as multiform as nature or society has made them. He has found and studied humanity, not only in English towns and villages, in the glare of gaslight and under the open sky, but on the Roman Campagna, in Venetian gondolas, in Florentine streets, on the Boulevards of Paris, and in the Prado of Madrid, in the snow-bound forests of Russia, beneath the palms of Persia and upon Egyptian sands, on the coasts of Normandy and the salt plains of Brittany, among Druses and Arabs and Syrians, in brand-new Boston and amidst the ruins of Thebes."

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